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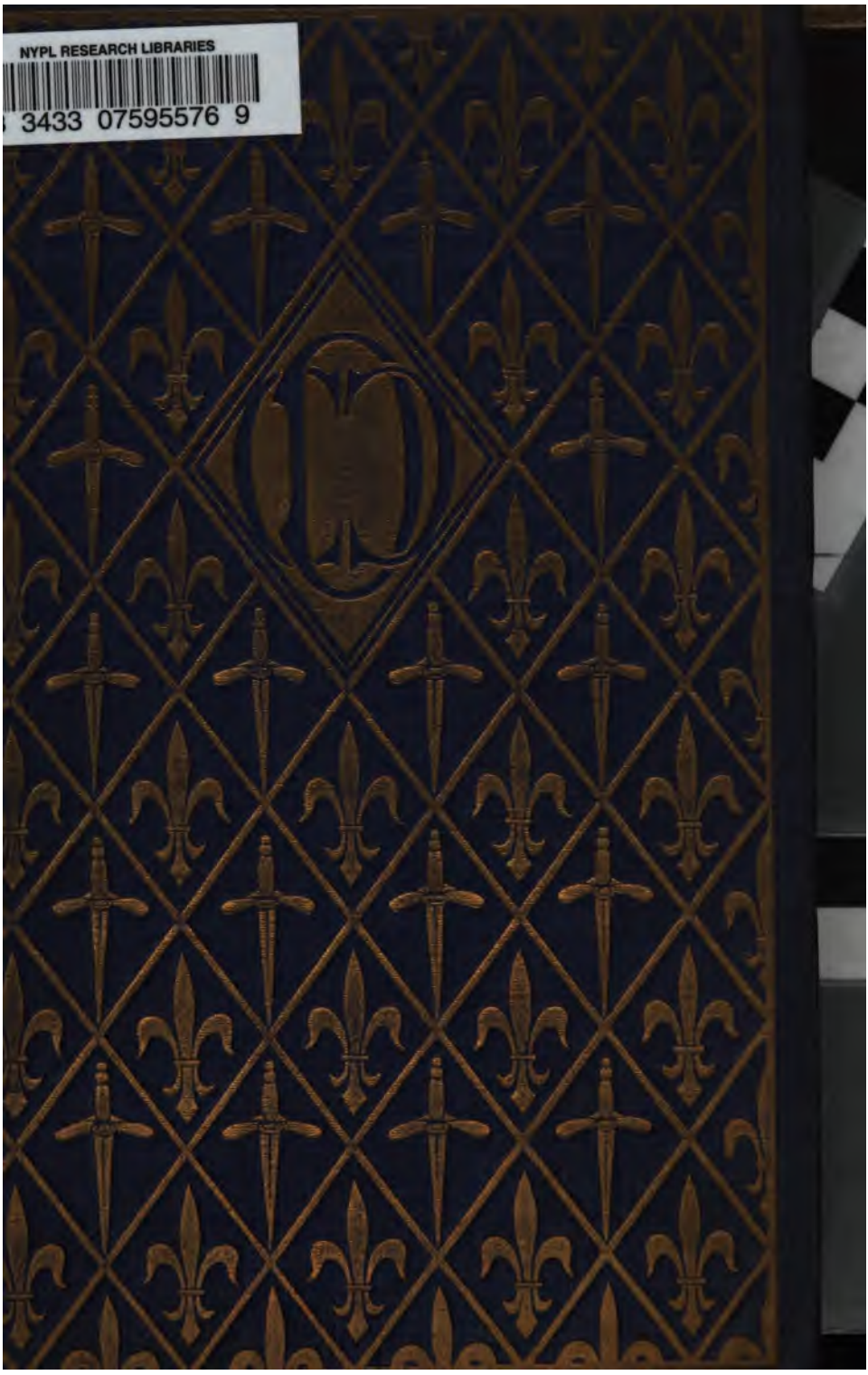

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The accidental poisoning of Alexander VI. and of his son Cæsar Borgia, Duke of Romagna.—THE BORGIAS.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

CELEBRATED CRIMES

TRANSLATED BY

I. G. BURNHAM

ILLUSTRATED BY

JACQUES WAGREZ

OF PARIS

THE
RITTENHOUSE PRESS
PHILADELPHIA

[C 1395]

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THE BORGIAS

CELEBRATED CRIMES

THE BORGIAS

1492–1507

On the eighth of April, 1492, in a sleeping apartment of the Carreggi Palace, a league or more from Florence, three men were grouped about a bed on which a fourth lay dying.

The first of the three, who was seated at the foot of the bed, half concealed by the heavy curtains of gold brocade, was Ermolas Barbaro, author of the treatise on "*Celibacy*," and of the "*Studies upon Pliny*," who, being at Rome the year before as Ambassador from the Republic of Florence, had been appointed Patriarch of Aquileia by Innocent VIII.

The second who was kneeling, and holding a hand of the moribund in his own, was Angelo Politiano, the Catullus of the fifteenth century, a highly cultivated genius of the antique type, whose polished Latin verses would have enabled him to pass anywhere for a poet of the Augustan period.

The third who was standing against one of the twisted columns of the canopy, and following with an expression of deep sadness the progress of the disease upon the dying man's face, was the illustrious Pico of Mirandola, who could speak twenty-two different languages

when he was but twenty years old, and who offered to reply in each of the twenty-two to seven hundred questions to be propounded to him by the twenty most learned men in the whole world, if they could be got together at Florence.

The dying man was Lorenzo the Magnificent; he had suffered since the beginning of the year from a fierce and obstinate fever, aggravated by the gout, which was hereditary in his family, and, realizing at last the utter inutility and powerlessness of the draughts of dissolved pearls, administered by the charlatan Leoni di Spoleto, who adapted his remedies to the wealth rather than to the needs of his patient, he had concluded that he must be reconciled to part with his sweet-voiced mistresses and his silver-tongued poets, and to leave behind his luxurious palaces. He had sent, therefore, to request the Dominican monk, Girolamo Francesco Savonarola, to visit him and give him absolution for his sins, which, if committed by a man less highly placed, would have been called crimes.

It was not, however, without some secret dread, as against which the flattery of his friends was powerless, that the voluptuary and usurper awaited the coming of the stern, ascetic preacher, whose words shook Florence to her foundations, and upon whose forgiveness all his hopes of the other world rested. For Savonarola was one of those men of marble, who, like the statue of the Commander, knock at the doors of riotous livers, in the midst of their fêtes and orgies, to tell them that the time has come when they must begin to think of the hereafter.

Born at Ferrara, whither his family, which was one of the most illustrious in Padua, had been induced to go by Marquis Nicolas d'Este, he was, at twenty-three years

of age, led by an irresistible vocation for the life of a priest, to run away from his father's house, and take the vows at the Dominican convent in Florence. He was then appointed by his superiors to give lessons in philosophy, and during the early years of his novitiate had to contend with all the disadvantages of a weak and discordant voice, defective pronunciation, and, more than all else, with complete physical prostration, brought about by too great abstinence.

Thenceforth Savonarola condemned himself to absolute seclusion, and disappeared in the depths of the convent, as if the stone had rolled back across the door of the tomb. Kneeling upon the cold flags, praying without cessation before a wooden crucifix, his mind raised to the highest pitch of exaltation by vigils and penances, he soon passed from mere meditation to seeing visions, and began to feel in his heart the secret, prophetic impulse which summoned him to preach the reformation of the Church.

The reformation preached by Savonarola, however, was more reverential than that preached by Luther, which it preceded by about twenty-five years, and showed more respect to existing institutions, while attacking men; its aim being to bring about a change of human dogmas, but not of the divine faith itself. His appeals were not like those of the German monk, to men's reason, but to their imaginations; with him logic always held a subordinate place to inspiration; he was not a theologian, but a prophet.

Nevertheless, although he had thus far yielded to the authority of the Church, he had already raised his voice in opposition to the temporal power. In his eyes religion and liberty were two virgins of equal sanctity, so that Lorenzo seemed to him no less guilty in violating the

one, than Innocent VIII. in dishonoring the other. The result was that so long as Lorenzo lived his life of profligate, careless luxury, Savonarola consistently refused, despite the most persistent urging, to seem to sanction by his presence a power he regarded as illegitimate. But when Lorenzo on his death-bed sent for him, that was another matter. The austere monk set out at once, bareheaded and barefooted, hoping to save not the dying man's soul alone, but the liberty of the republic.

Lorenzo, as we have said, was awaiting Savonarola's arrival with impatience mingled with anxiety, and when he heard his steps approaching, his pale face assumed a more cadaverous hue than before, as he raised himself upon his elbow, motioning to his three friends to leave the room. They obeyed at once, and had hardly passed out at one door, when the curtain at the other was raised and the monk appeared upon the threshold, pale of face, and with grave and impassive mien. Lorenzo dei Medici, as his eye fell upon him, read in his face the inflexibility of a statue, and fell back upon his bed with a sigh so deep that it might have been his last.

The monk glanced about the room, as if to make sure that he was alone with the moribund; then he walked with slow and solemn step toward the bed. Lorenzo watched him draw near, apparently in deadly terror, and when he reached his side, he cried:

"Oh! my father, I have been a great sinner!"

"God's mercy is infinite," the preacher replied, "and I am authorized to extend God's mercy to thee."

"Do you think that God will forgive my sins?" cried the dying man, feeling hope revive in his breast when he heard those words which he little expected to hear from the monk's lips.

"Sins and crimes as well, God will forgive everything,"

Savonarola replied. "God will forgive thy frivolous amusements, thy adulterous connections, and thy obscene entertainments; so much for thy sins. God will forgive thee for having promised two thousand florins reward to the man who should bring you the heads of Dietisalvi, Nerone Nigi, Angelo Antinori and Nicolo Soderini, and twice that sum to him who should deliver them to you alive; God will forgive thee for putting to death upon the scaffold, or the gibbet, the son of Papi Orlandi, Francesco di Brisghella, Bernardo Nardi, Jacopo Frescobaldi, Amoretto Baldovinetti, Pietro Balducci, Bernardo di Bandino, Francesco Frescobaldi, and more than three hundred others, whose names, albeit less illustrious than theirs, were no less dear to Florence; so much for thy crimes."

At each of these names, which Savonarola pronounced slowly and with his eyes fixed upon the dying man's face, Lorenzo uttered a groan, which proved that the monk's memory was only too accurate.

"Do you really believe, father," he asked, doubtfully, when the catalogue was ended, "that God will forgive everything, both sins and crimes?"

"Everything," said Savonarola; "but only on three conditions."

"What are they?"

"First, that thou dost have unquestioning faith in the power and mercy of God."

"Father," replied Lorenzo eagerly, "such faith I already feel in the inmost depths of my soul."

"Second, that thou dost restore the property of other people, which thou hast unlawfully confiscated and retained."

"Shall I have time, father?"

"God will give thee time."

Lorenzo closed his eyes as if to reflect more at his ease.

"Yes, father, I will do it," he said, after a moment's silence.

"Third," continued Savonarola, "that thou dost restore to the republic her former independence and freedom of action."

Lorenzo, with a convulsive movement, rose to a sitting posture, gazing into the Dominican's eyes to see if he were not mistaken and had really heard aright. Savonarola repeated his words.

"Never! never!" cried Lorenzo, falling back upon the bed, and shaking his head vigorously; "never!"

The monk without another word took a step toward the door.

"Oh! my father! my father!" shrieked the dying man, "do not leave me thus. Have pity on me!"

"Have thou pity on Florence," retorted the monk.

"But, Florence is free, my father; Florence is happy."

"Florence is enslaved, Florence is poor," cried Savonarola; "poor in genius, poor in wealth, and poor in gallant hearts. Poor in genius, because thy son Pietro will come after thee, Lorenzo; poor in wealth, because thou hast maintained the splendor of thy family, and the credit of thy treasury with the funds of the republic; poor in gallant hearts, because thou hast despoiled the lawful magistrates of the authority which the constitution gave them, and hast turned thy fellow-citizens aside from the twofold civil and military career, in which they were wont to display all the virtue and valor of the olden time, before thou hadst enervated them by thy luxurious mode of life, so that when the day comes, a day which is not far distant," continued the monk, whose eyes flashed, as if he were reading the future,

"when the barbarians pour down from the mountains, the walls of our cities, like the walls of Jericho, will crumble and fall at the first blast of their trumpets."

"And you wish me, on my death-bed, to relinquish the power on which rests the glory of my whole life?"

"It is not I who wish it, but the Lord," replied Savonarola coldly.

"Impossible! impossible!" muttered Lorenzo.

"Very well! die then as thou hast lived," cried the monk, "surrounded by thy courtiers and flatterers, and may they destroy thy soul as they have destroyed thy body!"

With that the implacable Dominican, deaf to the shrieks of the moribund, withdrew from the room with the same expression and the same measured step with which he entered it, seeming to soar above petty human affairs like a spirit already released from its earthly bonds.

Ermolao, Politiano and Pico, who had overheard all that passed, rushed back into the room at the cry which Lorenzo uttered when the priest disappeared; they found him hugging tightly in his arms a crucifix which he had torn from the headboard of his bed. In vain did they try to soothe him with words of comfort. Lorenzo replied only by sobs; and within an hour after the scene we have described he died, with his lips glued to the feet of the crucifix of Christ, in the arms of his three friends, the most highly favored of whom, although they were all young men, was destined to survive him no more than two years.

"As his demise was destined to entail disaster," says Nicolo Machiavelli, "Heaven saw fit to send most unambiguous warnings of what was to come; the dome of the Church of Santa Reparata was struck by lightning and Rodrigo Borgia was chosen pope."

Toward the close of the fifteenth century, that is to say, at the period when our narrative opens, the square of St. Peter's at Rome was very far from presenting the imposing spectacle which in these days of ours bursts upon the vision of those who approach it by way of the Piazza dei Rusticucci.

The basilica of Constantine was no longer in existence, and that of Michel Angelo, the monument of thirty popes, representing the labor of three centuries, and an outlay of two hundred and sixty millions, was not then erected. The former structure, after weathering the storms of eleven hundred and forty-five years, had reached a dangerous condition of decay about 1440, and Nicolas V., the artistic predecessor of Julius II. and Leo X., caused it to be torn down, as well as the temple of Probus Anicius, which adjoined it, and on its site had laid the foundations of a new temple designed by the architects Rosselini and Baptista Alberti. But a few years later, Nicolas V. being no more, and the Venetian Paul II. being unable to give more than five thousand crowns toward continuing the work of his predecessor, the work of construction came to a standstill when the walls were hardly above ground, and the effect produced was that of a building born dead, an even more melancholy sight than a ruin.

As to the square itself, it had not, as the reader will readily understand from what we have said thus far, the beautiful colonnade by Bernini, nor the gushing fountains, nor the Egyptian obelisk, which, according to Pliny, was erected by Pharaoh Nuncorus in the city of Heliopolis, and transported to Rome by Caligula, and by him placed in the circus of Nero, where it remained until 1586. As the circus of Nero was situated upon the very spot where St. Peter's stands to-day, as the base

of the obelisk covered the site of the present sacristy, it must then have seemed to shoot up like a gigantic needle amid the half-hewn columns of the uneven walls, and the rough unfinished blocks of stone.

To the right of this infant ruin rose the Vatican, a superb Tower of Babel upon which all the famous architects of the Roman school have tried their hands for a thousand years. At this time its two magnificent chapels were not built, nor its twelve great halls, its twenty-two courts, its thirty staircases and two thousand apartments; for Sextus V., that sublime swineherd who did so many things in his five years' incumbency of the papal chair, had not then added to it the vast eastern wing overlooking the court of St. Damasus. But it was already a venerable and sacred palace, hallowed by memories of the olden time, in which Charlemagne was entertained when Leo III. placed the imperial crown upon his head.

On the ninth of August, 1492, all Rome, from the Porta del Popolo to the Coliseum, and from the Baths of Diocletian to the castle of San Angelo seemed to have assembled by appointment upon the Square of St. Peter's. So dense was the multitude that it overflowed into the adjacent streets, which radiated from the square like the rays of a star, and masses of people could be seen, like a waving, many colored carpet, swarming over the basilica, grouped in clusters on the blocks of stone, clinging to the columns, passing in at the doors of the houses and reappearing at the windows, in such numbers and so crowded together that it seemed as if each window were walled up with heads. Now this whole vast multitude had its eyes fixed upon a single point in the Vatican, for the conclave was in session therein, and as Innocent VIII. had been dead but

sixteen days, the choice of a pope was in progress. Rome is the city of elections; from her foundation to the present time, a period of some twenty-six centuries, she has continually elected her kings, her consuls, her tribunes, her emperors and her popes; so it is that Rome, during the sessions of the conclave, seems afflicted with a peculiar fever which impels every citizen toward the Vatican or Monte Cavallo, according as the scarlet-clad assemblage is convened in one or the other of those palaces. In truth, the accession of a new pope is an affair of great moment for the whole world; for the average duration of the reigns of all the popes from St. Peter to Gregory XVI. being about eight years, each period of eight years is a season of tranquillity or confusion, of justice or injustice, of peace or war, according to the character of the successful aspirant.

Never, perhaps, from the day when St. Peter's first successor took his seat on the pontifical throne down to the present interregnum, had the public unrest been so noticeable as at this moment, when the whole population had assembled, a vast, breathless throng upon the Square of St. Peter's and the streets leading to it. Nor was this condition of men's minds altogether without reason, for Innocent VIII. (who was called the father of his people because he had increased the number of his subjects by eight sons and as many daughters), after a life passed in debauchery, had breathed his last after a long illness, during which two hundred and twenty murders were committed in the streets of Rome, if we may believe the journal of Stefano Infessura.

The reins of power passed, according to the established custom, into the hands of the cardinal camerlingo, who always exercises supreme authority during an interregnum. But the duties devolving upon him were many

and arduous. He had to attend to the coining of money, stamped with his name and arms; to the dressing, shaving and embalming of the dead pope's body, and laying it away after nine days devoted to the funeral rites in the recess where the mortal remains of the last pope are placed provisionally until the body of his successor takes its place, and consigns it to its final resting-place; he had also to superintend the walling up of the doors of the apartments in which the conclave holds its sessions, and the window opening on the balcony from which proclamation of the election is made. Consequently he had no time to devote to police matters, so that the carnival of murder went gaily on and the people were loudly calling for an energetic hand to force the swords and daggers back into their sheathes.

So it was that the eyes of this vast multitude were, as we have said, fixed upon the Vatican, and particularly upon a certain chimney, whence the first signal was expected to issue, when suddenly, as the bells were ringing the Ave Maria, that is to say, just as night was beginning to fall, loud shouts, mingled with roars of laughter rose from the crowd, a discordant medley of threats and raillery. The demonstration was caused by the appearance of a thin column of smoke which issued from the top of the chimney in question and rose straight into the air. This smoke was equivalent to an announcement that Rome was still without a master, and that the world had not yet a new pope; for it was caused by burning the ballots in token that the cardinals had not as yet found it possible to agree.

This tiny column of smoke had scarcely appeared, to disappear almost immediately, than the whole of the vast multitude, well aware that nothing more was to be expected that night and that the proceedings were

suspended until ten o'clock the next morning, the hour at which the cardinals began their voting for the day,—the multitude, we say, withdrew in an uproarious, satirical mood, as the crowd scatters after the last piece of an exhibition of fireworks; so that in a very short time, on the spot where a whole city was collected a few moments before, no one was to be seen save a few belated sightseers who lived in the neighborhood or upon the square itself, and were, therefore, in less haste than the others to return home. But these last groups dwindled away gradually by the time that the clocks rang the half after nine, for at that hour the streets began to be unsafe, and soon the silence was broken only by the hurried step of some solitary passer-by. The doors closed one after another, the lights that shone in the windows were extinguished, and when ten o'clock struck, houses, squares and streets were plunged in utter darkness, save for one of the windows of the Vatican, in which a light was still burning.

As the clock struck, a man wrapped in a cloak rose like a shadow against one of the columns of the unfinished basilica and, creeping slowly and cautiously among the blocks of stone which lay around the foundations of the new temple, walked out as far as the fountain which stood in the centre of the square on the present site of the obelisk of which we have already spoken. There he stopped, doubly concealed by the darkness of the night, and the shadow of the fountain, and having looked around to make sure that he was alone, he drew his sword and struck its point three times upon the pavement, striking fire at every blow. This signal, for such it was, did not pass unnoticed; the solitary lamp which was still burning in the Vatican at once went out and, at the same moment a packet was thrown from the

window, and struck the ground a few steps away from the man in the cloak. Guided unerringly by the metallic sound which it gave forth when it came in contact with the flagstones, he put his hand upon it at once, notwithstanding the darkness and, as soon as he had it in his possession, walked rapidly away.

He maintained his swift pace without pausing, half way along Borgo-Vecchio, when he turned to the right down a street at the end of which was a madonna with her lighted lamp. He drew near the lamp and took from his pocket the object he had picked up, which was neither more nor less than a Roman crown, but it was so made as to unscrew, leaving a hole in the centre, in which was a letter, which he to whom it was addressed began to read at the risk of being recognized, in such haste was he to learn its contents.

We say at the risk of being recognized because, in his eagerness, the nocturnal prowler threw back the hood of his cloak and, as his head was fairly within the circle of light shed by the lamp, it was easy to distinguish the features of a handsome youth of some twenty-five or twenty-six years, clad in a violet doublet, slashed at shoulder and elbow, so as to show his shirt, and having upon his head a cap of the same color, with a long black plume drooping over his shoulder. To be sure, his halt was not a long one, for he had no sooner finished reading the letter, or rather the note, which had been conveyed to him in such an unusual and mysterious way, than he replaced it in his silver wallet and, rearranging his cloak so that it concealed all the lower part of his face, started off again at the same swift pace, passed through Borgo San-Spirito and turned into Via della Longara, which he followed as far as the Church of *Regina Coeli*. When he reached that point he

knocked three times at the door of a handsome house. The door was immediately opened, and he ran swiftly up the staircase into a room where two women were awaiting him with evident impatience.

"Well! Francesco, what news?" they cried in unison as soon as he appeared.

"Good news, mother! good news, sister!" he replied, kissing the one and giving his hand to the other; "our father has gained three votes to-day, but he still lacks six of a majority."

"Pray, is there no means of purchasing them?" cried the elder of the ladies, while the other, without speaking, seconded the inquiry with an eloquent look.

"Yes, indeed, mother," the youth replied, "and that selfsame thought occurred to my father. He gives Cardinal Orsino his palace at Rome with his castles of Monticello and Soriano; to Cardinal Colonna the abbey of Subiaco; to Cardinal St. Angelo the bishop's palace at Porto, with its furniture and wine-cellar; to the Cardinal of Parma the town of Nepi; to the Cardinal of Genoa the Church of Santa-Maria-in-via-Lata; and to Cardinal Savelli the Church of Santa-Maria Maggiore, and the town of Civita-Castellana; as for Cardinal Ascanio Sforza he knows that we sent him day before yesterday four mules laden with money and plate, and he has undertaken to hand five thousand ducats to the Cardinal Patriarch of Venice."

"But how are we to make known Rodrigo's intentions to the others?" asked the elder woman.

"My father has anticipated everything, and has invented a very simple means; you know, my mother, how much ceremony is used about carrying their dinner to the cardinals."

"Yes, it is carried on a litter, in a great basket bearing the arms of the cardinal for whom it is intended."

"My father has purchased the bishop who inspects the dinners; to-morrow is a flesh day, and chickens for roasting will be sent to Cardinals Orsino, Colonna, Savelli, St. Angelo, Parma and Genoa; each chicken will contain a deed of gift in due form, executed by me in my father's name, of the houses, palaces or churches destined for each recipient."

"Excellent," said his mother; "now I am sure that all will go well."

"And by the grace of God," interposed the younger woman with an ironical smile, "our father will be pope."

"A happy day for us!" exclaimed Francesco.

"And for Christianity," rejoined his sister with still greater irony.

"Lucrezia, Lucrezia," said the mother, "you do not deserve the happiness which is in store for us."

"What matters it, if it comes all the same? Besides, you know the old proverb mother mine: 'Large families are blessed of the Lord,' so what may we not expect for ours which bears so strong a resemblance to those of the patriarchs?"

As she spoke she cast upon her brother a look of such significance that the young man blushed; but as he had other things to think of for the moment than his incestuous love, he ordered four servants to be awakened; and while they were dressing and arming themselves to attend him, he signed the six deeds of gift to be sent to the cardinals the following day; for, as he did not wish to be seen at their places of abode, it had occurred to him to deliver them under cover of the darkness to the confidential servants who were to see that they were

handed them at the dinner hour as agreed. When the documents were executed in proper form, and the servants ready, he went away with them, leaving the two women to dream golden dreams of their future grandeur.

At early dawn the people came hurrying to the square again, as eager and excited as before, and at ten o'clock in the morning the column of smoke began again its accustomed task of announcing, amid laughter and imprecations, that no one of the cardinals had secured a majority. The report began to gain currency, however, that the choice was narrowed down to three aspirants, Rodrigo Borgia, Guilio della Rovere, and Ascanio Sforza; for the people knew nothing of the four mules laden with plate and money which had been sent to the last named, and in consideration of which he had turned his votes over to his rival.

At the height of the excitement caused by this fresh diversion, the sound of sacred music was heard; it came from a procession of monks, ordered by the cardinal camerlingo as a means of inducing heaven to decree the prompt election of a pope, and was on its way from the Church of Ava Coeli to the capitol, stopping before the principal Madonnas, and in the most frequented churches. As soon as the crucifix which was carried at the head of the procession appeared, absolute silence fell upon the crowd, and every one kneeled where he stood; a period of silent, devout meditation succeeded the tumult and confusion which had reigned supreme a few moments earlier, and assumed a more threatening character at each fresh column of smoke. Many people believed that the procession was intended to serve a political, as well as a religious end, and that its influence was likely to be as great on earth as in heaven. At all

events if such was the design of the camerlingo, he was not at fault, and the effect produced was such as he desired; when the procession had passed on, although the laughter and horse-play continued, the shouts and threats were heard no more. Thus the day slipped by, for at Rome no one works; every one is either a cardinal or a lackey, and lives, one knows not how. The crowd was more dense than ever about two in the afternoon, when another procession, which was as successful in causing renewed uproar, as the earlier one in enforcing silence, crossed the square of St. Peter's; it was the dinner procession. The people greeted it with their customary shouts of laughter, with no suspicion, in their irreverence, that this second procession was more efficacious than the first, in that it was to be the means of making a new pope.

The *Ave Maria* rang as on the preceding day, and found expectation disappointed once again; as the clocks struck half after eight, the smoke appeared once more at the mouth of the chimney. But as a report was at the same time sent out from within the Vatican, to the effect that there would in all probability be an election the next day, the good people possessed their souls in patience. It had been a very hot day, too, and accustomed as they were to shade and idleness, they were so exhausted, and so scorched by the sun that they had not the strength to shout.

The following morning, August 11, 1492, was dark and stormy, but the crowd was not prevented thereby from thronging as before, the streets, squares, doorways, houses and churches. Indeed the state of the weather was a downright blessing to them, for though it was still hot, there was no scorching sun.

Toward nine o'clock a terrific storm burst over the

Transtevere; but what mattered rain, lightning and thunder! The people were thinking about something entirely different, they were expecting their pope; he had been promised them that day, and it was easy to see from the prevailing temper that there would be trouble if the day passed without an election. As the hours flew by, the excitement became constantly more intense. Nine o'clock struck, half after nine, and quarter to ten, and nothing transpired to fulfill or wreck their hopes. At last the first stroke of ten rang out, and all eyes were fixed on the chimney; the strokes followed each other slowly, and each found an echo in the great heart of the multitude. The tenth and last stroke died tremblingly away in space, and a tremendous shout from a hundred thousand throats succeeded the deathlike silence:

"*Non v'è fumo!* There is no smoke!"

That is to say: "We have a pope." At that moment the rain began to fall; but it fell unheeded, so great were the joy and impatience of the populace. At last a small stone fell from the walled-up window opening on the balcony, on which all eyes were fastened; a roar of applause greeted its fall. The opening gradually increased in size, and in a few moments was sufficiently large to allow a man to step out upon the balcony.

Thereupon Cardinal Ascanio Sforza's face appeared; but just as he was in the act of stepping forth he seemed to take alarm at the thunder and lightning, hesitated a moment, and finally retreated. Immediately the whole multitude burst out with the fury of a tempest, shouting, yelling and cursing, and threatening to demolish the Vatican and seek the pope for themselves. At that, Cardinal Sforza, more alarmed by the storm of popular indignation than by the raging of the elements, came out upon the balcony, and made the following

announcement between two peals of thunder, and amid a breathless silence which seemed incomprehensible to one who had heard the uproar which preceded it:

"I am the messenger of glad tidings: the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Signor Rodrigo Lenzuolo Borgia, Archbishop of Valencia, Cardinal Deacon of San Nicolas-in-Carcere, and Vice Chancellor of the hierarchy, has been chosen pope, and has assumed the name of Alexander VI."

The news of this selection was greeted with outspoken satisfaction. Rodrigo Borgia had the reputation of being a dissolute man, it is true, but libertinage ascended the papal throne with Sextus V. and Innocent VIII., so that there was nothing novel to the Romans in the strange spectacle of a pope with a mistress and five children. The most essential thing at the moment was that the power should fall into strong hands, and it was even more important for the tranquillity of the Holy City that the new pope should inherit the sword of St. Paul than the keys of St. Peter.

In like manner, the dominating characteristic of the fêtes which were given on this occasion was the predominance of the martial element over the religious; and it seemed as if they were celebrating the accession of a young conqueror to a temporal throne, rather than the election of a gray-haired cardinal to the papal chair. Nothing was to be seen or heard but prophetic inscriptions and word-play upon the name of Alexander, which for the second time seemed to promise universal empire to the Romans. On the very evening after the election, indeed, amid the brilliant illuminations and blaze of fireworks, which transformed the city into one vast lake of fire, the following inscription was greeted with frantic applause by the people:

"Under Cæsar in former days the victories of the Roman arms made Rome a queen at home, and mistress of the whole world; but Alexander will promote her glory even more than Cæsar; for Cæsar was but a man, while Alexander is a god."

The new pope had no sooner gone through with the necessary formalities attendant upon his exaltation and paid to each of the cardinals the stipulated price of his simony than he cast his eyes from the commanding eminence of the Vatican upon that vast political chess-board known as Europe, upon which he hoped to control the movements of the pieces according to the dictates of his genius.

The world had arrived at one of those critical periods of transformation which mark the closing of one epoch and the opening of another. In the East, Turkey; in the South, Spain; in the West, France; and in the North, Germany, were on the point of assuming, with the rank of great nations, the influence which they were destined to exert in the future over states of secondary importance.

Let us then, with Alexander, take a rapid survey of them, and see what their respective attitudes were with regard to Italy, upon which the covetous eyes of all were longingly fixed.

Constantine Paleologus Dragozes, besieged by three hundred thousand Turks, appealed in vain to all Christendom for aid; he was determined not to survive the loss of his empire, and was found among the dead near the Tophana Gate when Mahomet II. entered Constantinople on the thirtieth of May, 1453. After a long reign, which earned for him the surname of *Fatile*, or the Conqueror, Mahomet died, leaving two sons, the elder of whom ascended the throne under the title of Bajazet II.

The new Sultan's accession, however, was not effected with the ease which his right of primogeniture and his father's choice promised. Djein, his younger brother, better known as Zizim, based his claim upon the fact that he was *Porphyrogenitus*,* that is to say that he was born after Mahomet became sultan, while Bajazet, whose birth antedated his father's accession, was naught but the son of a private individual. It was a wretched quibble, but in a land where might makes right, it was sufficient ground for a war. The two brothers, each at the head of an army, met on Asian territory in 1482. Djein was defeated after a battle lasting seven hours. Hotly pursued by his brother, who gave him no time to collect the scattered remnant of his army, he was compelled to take ship at a seaport in Cilicia, and make his escape to Rhodes, where he sought the protection of the Knights of St. John. They did not dare to offer him an asylum on their island which lay so near to the coast of Asia, but sent him to France, where he was kept under close guard in one of their commanderies, notwithstanding the urgent entreaties of Cait Bey, Sultan of Egypt, who was in revolt against Bajazet, and wished to have the young prince in his army to give his rebellion some similitude to lawful warfare. A similar request was made, with a similar object, by Mathias Corvinus, King of Hungary; Ferdinand, King of Aragon and Sicily, and Ferdinand of Naples.

Bajazet, who was well aware of the danger of such a rival, if he should once enter into an alliance with any one of the princes with whom he was at war, sent ambassadors to Charles VIII. of France, offering him, if he would agree to detain Djein in his dominions, a considerable pension, and the sovereignty of the Holy Land

* Born to the purple.

as soon as Jerusalem should be wrested from the Sultan of Egypt. The French king accepted, but thereupon Innocent VIII. intervened, and put in a claim of his own to Djein, ostensibly to procure the support of his name to a crusade he was preaching against the Turks, but in reality to put his hand upon the pension of forty thousand ducats promised by Bajazet to any one of the princes of Christendom, who would undertake to be his brother's gaoler.

Charles VIII. did not dare to refuse a request of the spiritual head of the Christian world, when supported by such blessed arguments; so that Djein left France, in company with D'Aubusson, Grand Master of the Knights of St. John, in whose special charge he was, and who had agreed to give him up in consideration of a cardinal's hat.

On the thirteenth of March, 1489, the unfortunate youth, upon whom so many conflicting interests were centred, made his formal entry into Rome, mounted upon a noble horse, and clad in a superb Eastern costume, between the Prior of Auvergne, nephew of D'Aubusson, and Francesco Cibo, the pope's son.

He had remained at Rome ever since, and Bajazet, true to the promise which he had such a vital interest in keeping, had paid the sovereign pontiff his pension of forty thousand ducats with scrupulous promptitude.

So much for Turkey.

Ferdinand and Isabella were the rulers of Spain, and were laying the foundations of that world-wide dominion, which made it possible for Charles V. to say, twenty-five years later, that the sun did not set upon his territories. These two sovereigns, who are known to history by the distinctive name of "Catholic," had made themselves masters of every part of Spain, one after another,

and driven the Moors from Granada, their last foothold in the peninsula; while two men of daring and genius, Bartholomew Diaz and Christopher Columbus, were discovering for their benefit, one a lost world, and the other a world, the existence of which was unsuspected. By virtue of their victories in the old world, and their discoveries in the new, Ferdinand and Isabella had acquired a degree of influence at the court of Rome which none of their predecessors had enjoyed.

So much for Spain.

On the thirtieth of August, 1483, Charles VIII. became King of France, in succession to his father, Louis XI., who, by numberless executions, had reduced the kingdom to a state of tranquillity befitting the accession of an infant and the regency of a woman. A glorious regency it was, too, and resulted in demolishing the pretensions of the princes of the blood, and in putting an end to civil strife by uniting to the crown all the remaining great independent fiefs. At the time of which we are writing Charles VIII. was about twenty-two years of age, and was, if we may believe La Trémouille, a prince of great heart, though small in stature. On the other hand, according to Commenes, he was a mere child, hardly fit to leave the nest, without wit or money, physically weak, inordinately self-willed, and surrounded by fools, instead of wise counsellors. Lastly, according to the estimate of Guicciardini, who, being an Italian may be somewhat prejudiced, he was a young man little skilled in the motives which govern men's actions, but was carried away by an ardent desire to make his reign a glorious one—a desire due rather to his fickle-mindedness and impulsiveness, than to a conviction of his own genius; he abhorred fatigue and business of all kinds, and when he did try to fix his attention upon it, he

almost always showed himself to be devoid of caution and judgment. If, by chance, anything about him did seem at first glance to be worthy of praise, a closer inspection generally developed the fact that there was more vice than virtue in it. He was liberal, it is true, but his liberality was without rhyme or reason. He was sometimes immovable in his determination, but from obstinacy, and not from well-grounded conviction; and what his flatterers called amiability much better deserved the name of insensibility to insult, or faint-heartedness.

If the last quoted author is to be believed his physical appearance was even less attractive and corresponded wonderfully well with his feebleness of mind and character. He was very small, with an enormous head, a short, thick neck, high, broad shoulders, and long, thin legs and thighs; as his face was exceptionally ugly, except for his glance, which had some little dignity and force, and as his limbs were out of all proportion to each other, he looked more like a monster than a man.

Such was the man whom fortune destined for a career of conquest, and for whom heaven had greater glory in store than he could bear.

So much for France.

The Imperial throne was occupied by Frederic III., well surnamed the Peaceful, not because he had always preserved peace, but because he was constantly whipped, and so was always driven to sue for peace. The first proof he gave of this philosophical forbearance was during his journey to Rome to be crowned. While crossing the Apennines he was attacked by brigands, who robbed him, but whom he made no attempt to capture. The immunity from punishment enjoyed by these petty thieves soon encouraged those who did business on

a larger scale to take a hand. Amurath seized a part of Hungary, Mathias Corvin laid hold of Lower Austria, and Frederic consoled himself for these invasions by repeating the maxim:

"Forgetfulness is the only remedy for the loss of what one holds dear."

At the time of which we are writing he had reigned fifty-three years; he had just arranged a marriage between his son Maximilian and Marie de Bourgogne, and had placed his son-in-law, Albert of Bavaria, under the ban of the empire, because he had put forward a claim to the Tyrol. He was too much engrossed with his own affairs, therefore, to have much time to give to Italy. Furthermore, he was engaged in the quest for a devise for the House of Austria, a matter of much greater moment to a man of his disposition. This devise, which Charles V. was almost to realize, was at last found, to the great delight of the old Emperor, who concluded that there was nothing more for him to do on earth after this last proof of his wisdom; and so he died, August 19, 1493, leaving the empire to his son Maximilian.

This devise was nothing more than the five vowels, A, E, I, O, U, representing the initial letters of these five words:

AUSTRIAE EST IMPERARE ORBI UNIVERSO.

It is Austria's destiny to rule the whole world.

So much for Germany.

Now that we have taken a cursory glance at the four nations, which, as we have said, were in a fair way to become European powers of first-rate importance, let us look for a moment at the second-rate States, which formed a circle about Rome nearer at hand, and would serve as a buckler for the spiritual queen of the world, if the fancy should seize one of the political giants we

have described to stretch out his arms to attack her, across the Adriatic or the Alps, the Mediterranean or the Apennines.

These States were the Kingdom of Naples, the Duchy of Milan, the magnificent Republic of Florence, and the most serene Republic of Venice.

The Kingdom of Naples was in the hands of the aged Ferdinand, whose birth was not only illegitimate, but probably incestuous as well. His father, Alphonso of Aragon, inherited the crown from Joanna of Naples, who adopted him as her successor. But in order to guard against the possibility of a failure of heirs, she named two, instead of one, as she lay dying, so that Alphonso had to maintain his rights against Réné. The rival claimants quarreled over the crown for some time, but at last the house of Aragon prevailed over the house of Anjou, and during the year 1442, Alphonso's title was definitely established. We shall soon find Charles VIII. asserting the rights of the rejected claimant.

Ferdinand had neither the personal courage nor the intellect of his father, and yet he triumphed over his enemies one after another. He had two rivals, either of whom was his superior in every respect. One was his nephew, the Count of Viana, who used his uncle's illegitimacy as a pretext, and won over all the Aragonese party; the other was Duke John of Calabria, who was at the head of the Angevin faction. Nevertheless he held them both off, and maintained himself upon the throne by adopting a cautious line of action, which often amounted to duplicity. He had a cultivated mind and had been a student of the sciences, especially of the science of legislation. He was of medium height, with a large, well-shaped head; his face was open and honest

and surrounded by beautiful white hair, which fell over his shoulders. Lastly, although he had done but little to cultivate his physical strength by martial exercises, it was so great that one day in the market place at Naples, he seized a runaway bull by the horns and stopped him in his tracks, despite his desperate struggles to escape.

The election of Alexander caused him great uneasiness, and discreet as he ordinarily was, he let the remark escape him, in the presence of the messenger who brought him the news, that he was not pleased with the choice, nor did he see how any Christian could be, for Borgia had always been a bad man and would certainly be a bad pope. He added that even if the choice were an unexceptionable one and calculated to gratify everybody else, it was no less certain to be fatal to the house of Aragon, inasmuch as he was born a subject of that house, and owed to it the rise and progress of his fortune; for wherever reasons of State are involved, they speedily cause the closest ties of kinship and affection to be forgotten, much more the simple relation of subject and debtor.

We see that Ferdinand gauged Alexander with his usual perspicacity, which did not prevent him, however, as will soon appear, from being the first to form an alliance with him.

The Duchy of Milan belonged nominally to Giovanni Galeasso, grandson of Francesco Sforza, who took forcible possession on the twenty-sixth of February, 1450, and bequeathed it to his son, Galeasso Mario, father of the youthful reigning prince; we say nominally because the real master of the Milanais at this time was not the lawful heir, but his uncle, Ludovico, surnamed *Il Moro*, because of the mulberry tree which figured in his coat of arms. Exiled with his two

brothers, Philip, who was poisoned in 1479, and Ascanio, afterward cardinal, he returned to Milan a few days after the assassination of Galeasso Mario, which took place in the Church of San Stefano, December 26, 1476, and assumed the regency, the Duke being then but eight years old. From that time, although his nephew was now twenty-two, Ludovico had continued to govern the State, and in all probability would continue to do so for a long time to come; for a day or two after the young Duke manifested a purpose to take the reins into his own hands, he fell suddenly ill, and it was said openly that he had taken one of those lingering, deadly poisons, which the princes of that day resorted to so frequently that, even when a malady was due to natural causes, people always sought to attribute it to some hidden motive. However it may have been, Ludovico had sent his nephew, who was too weak to attend to the affairs of his duchy, to the Castle of Pavia, where he was pining away under the care of his wife, who was a daughter of Ferdinand of Naples.

Ludovico. himself, was an ambitious mortal, very bold and very deep, equally familiar with the sword and with poison, which he used indifferently, as occasion offered, without any decided preference or repugnance for either, and he was thoroughly determined to inherit from his nephew whether he died or did not die.

Although Florence still retained the name of a republic, it had gradually lost all the advantages of that form of government, and belonged in fact, if not of right, to Pietro dei Medici, to whom Lorenzo bequeathed it as part of his inheritance, at the peril of his soul's salvation. Unfortunately the son had little of the father's genius; he was handsome, it is true, while Lorenzo was extremely ugly; his voice was harmonious

and pleasant to listen to, while Lorenzo always talked through his nose; he was proficient in Greek and Latin, conversed easily and agreeably, and wrote impromptu verses almost as well as he who was called the Magnificent, but he was haughty and insolent in his bearing toward those who had made a study of public affairs, although he was himself profoundly ignorant therein. He was devoted to all forms of pleasure and passionately fond of women; and he gave unremitting attention to those bodily exercises which were calculated to exalt him in their eyes, especially the game of tennis, at which he was very strong. He promised himself that as soon as his period of mourning was passed, he would set, not Florence alone, but all the world agog with the splendor of his court and the magnificence and fame of his fêtes. So thought Pietro dei Medici, but heaven willed otherwise.

The Most Serene Republic of Venice, of which Augustino Barbarigo was doge, had attained the highest degree of power and splendor at the time of which we are writing. From Cadiz to the Palus Meotides not a harbor was closed to her thousand ships; in Italy she possessed, in addition to the banks of the lagoons (that is to say, the city), the former Duchy of Venice, the provinces of Bergamo, Brescia, Verona Vicenza and Padua; she had the March of Trevisano, which included Feltre, Belluno, Cadorin, the Polesine of Rovigo, and the principality of Ravenna; she had Friuli, less Aquileia; Istria, less Trieste; on the eastern shore of the Adriatic, Zara, Spalatro, and the Albanian coast; the islands of Zante and Corfu in the Ionian Sea, Lepanto and Patras in Greece, Meoron, Coron, Nauplia and Argos in the Morea, and Candia and the Kingdom of Cyprus in the Archipelago, in addition to several

small towns and settlements on the coast. Thus, from the mouth of the Po, to the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean, the most serene republic was mistress of the whole sea-coast, and Greece and Italy seemed to be little more than suburbs of Venice.

In the territories not held by Naples, Milan, Florence or Venice divers petty tyrants had established themselves, and exercised absolute sovereignty within their narrow limits. Thus the Colonna held sway at Ostia and Nettuno, the Montefeltri at Urbino, the Manfredi at Faenza, the Bentivogli at Bologna, the Malatesta at Rimini, the Vitelli at Città di Castello, the Beglioni at Perouse, the Orsini at Vicovaro, and the princes of Este at Ferrara.

And in the centre of this vast circle, composed of great powers, secondary powers, and petty despotisms, was Rome; the most elevated, but the weakest of all, without influence, without territory, without means, and without an army.

It was for the new pope to provide her with all these essentials of power; let us see therefore what manner of man was this Alexander VI., and how well fitted to begin and carry out such an undertaking.

Rodrigo Lenzuolo was born at Valencia in Spain in 1430 or 1431. Through his mother he was descended from a family which had royal blood in its veins, as some authors assert, and which put forward claims to the crowns of Aragon and Valencia before casting a covetous eye on the tiara. From early childhood he gave promise of marvelous quickness of wit, and as he grew to man's estate he displayed great aptitude for the learned sciences, especially jurisprudence; the result being that he won his first laurels as an advocate, a profession in which his readiness in the discussion of the

most intricate points soon brought him fame. However, he soon wearied of it, and suddenly abandoned it for the profession of arms which has father had followed before him; but after a few exploits, in which he gave proof of abundant self-possession and courage, he conceived a distaste for that as well. As his father happened to die and leave him a considerable fortune, just as a soldier's life began to pall upon him, he resolved to take up no other profession, but to devote himself henceforth to the gratification of his whims. About this time he became the lover of a widow with two daughters; the widow died, and Rodrigo took the daughters under his care, and put one of them in a convent; as the other was one of the most beautiful creatures imaginable he kept her for his mistress. She was the celebrated Rosa Vanozza, by whom he had five children: Francesco, Cæsar, Lucrezia, Guiffry, and a fifth whose name is unknown.

Rodrigo had withdrawn from public affairs and was devoting himself unreservedly to his mistress and his children, when he learned that his uncle, who had always shown as much affection for him as if he were his own son, was chosen pope under the name of Calixtus III. He was so deeply in love at that time, however, that his passion imposed silence upon his ambition, and he was almost terrified at his uncle's elevation, which would doubtless compel him to return to public life. Consequently, instead of hastening to Rome, as any other would have done in his place, he contented himself with writing his Holiness a letter, wherein he solicited the continuance of his good will, and wished him a long and prosperous pontificate.

This self-restraint on the part of one of his relatives, contrasting so strongly with the exhibitions of greed and ambition which greeted the new pontiff at every

step, made a deep impression upon Calixtus; he knew Rodrigo's worth, and at a moment when he was literally besieged by men of less than mediocre talent, the estimable qualities of this young man who kept so modestly in the background, assumed vast proportions in his eyes. He therefore wrote at once to Rodrigo that he must leave Valencia for Rome on receipt of the letter.

This command dislodged Rodrigo from the comfortable retreat he had made for himself, and in which he would perhaps have passed his life in contented retirement, had not fortune taken him by the hand and led him forth.

He was happy, he was rich, and the evil passions which were natural to him, were at least slumbering, if not altogether dead. He was alarmed for himself at the thought of changing the quiet, peaceful life he was leading for the life of ambition and excitement which was promised him, and instead of obeying his uncle at once, he delayed the necessary preparations for his departure, hoping that Calixtus would forget. But it was not to be; two months after the pope's letter, a Roman ecclesiastic arrived at Valencia, bearing Rodrigo's appointment to a living worth twenty thousand ducats a year, and a positive order to the appointee to take possession of his benefice at once.

Delay was no longer possible, and Rodrigo obeyed. He was reluctant, however, to part from her who had been the source of all his happiness for eight years. So Rosa Vanozza left Spain at the same time, and while he proceeded to Rome, she betook herself to Venice, accompanied by two confidential servants, and under the charge of a Spanish gentlemen, named Manuel Melchiori.

Fortune fulfilled all the promises she had made to Rodrigo, the pope received him as a son, and created him Archbishop of Valencia, Cardinal-deacon, and Vice-

chancellor, in rapid succession. In addition to all this Calixtus bestowed upon him a revenue of forty thousand ducats; so that when he was barely thirty-five years old Rodrigo was as wealthy and powerful as many a prince.

He was somewhat reluctant to accept the cardinalate, which required his constant presence at Rome, and would have preferred to be vicar-general of the church, a position which would have given him more opportunity to see his mistress and his family; but his uncle reminded him of the possibility that he might some day succeed him, and from that moment the thought of becoming the supreme ruler of kings and peoples took such hold of Rodrigo that it filled his mind to the exclusion of everything else.

Thenceforth the young cardinal began to manifest that monumental hypocrisy which helped to make him the most perfect incarnation of evil that ever existed on earth. He was no longer the same man; with words of humility and repentance ever upon his lips, his head bent as if beneath the weight of his past transgressions, treating as dross the wealth he had acquired, which ought, he said, to be restored to the poor, as it was rightfully theirs, he passed his life in churches and monasteries and hospitals, and established even in the eyes of his enemies, so says his biographer, the reputation of a Solomon for wisdom, a Job for patience, and a Moses for the dissemination of God's word. Rosa Vanozza alone was able to estimate the pious cardinal's conversion at its real worth.

It proved to be exceedingly well for him that he had acquired this reputation for sanctity, for his patron died after a reign of three years, three months and nineteen days, and thenceforth he had only his own merit to sustain him against the numerous enemies his rapid rise

in fortune had made for him. During the whole of the pontificate of Pius II. he held aloof from public affairs, and did not make his appearance again until the accession of Sextus IV. who gave him the Abbey of Subiaco, and sent him as legate to the Kings of Aragon and Portugal. On his return, which took place under Innocent VIII. he decided to bring his family to Rome, and they came thither under the escort of Don Melchiori, who thenceforth passed for Vanozza's husband, and took the name of Count Ferdinand of Castile.

Cardinal Rodrigo welcomed the noble Spaniard as a compatriot and friend; and he, with the view of leading a very secluded life, hired a house on Via della Longara, near the Church of Regina Coeli, on the banks of the Tiber. After passing the day in prayer and pious works, Rodrigo repaired thither every evening and laid aside his mask. It was commonly reported, although no one could prove it, that infamous things took place in that house; people talked of incestuous relations between the father and daughter, and between the brothers and their sister, and in order to put an end to these reports, Rodrigo sent Cæsar to Pisa to study, and married Lucrezia to a young Aragonese nobleman; thus only Vanozza and two of her sons remained at the house. Such was the condition of affairs when Innocent VIII. died and Rodrigo Borgia was chosen to succeed him.

We have seen by what means the choice was brought about. The five cardinals who had no part in the simoniacal transaction, namely the Cardinals of Naples, Sienna, Portugal, Sancta-Maria-in-Porticu and Saint Peter-in-Vinculis, protested loudly against the election, which they declared to have been a shameless piece of jobbery; but Rodrigo had obtained a majority of votes,

it mattered little by what means, and despite their protests Rodrigo was none the less the two hundred and sixteenth successor of St. Peter.

Although he had reached the goal of his ambition, Alexander VI. did not dare to lay aside at once the mask which Cardinal Borgia had worn so long; but he could not altogether conceal the joy his elevation caused him, and when he learned that the ballot had at last decided in his favor, he raised his arms, and cried in tones of heartfelt satisfaction:

"Am I really pope? Am I really Christ's vicar on earth? Am I really the keystone of the arch of the Christian world?"

"Yes, Holy Father," replied Cardinal Ascanio Sforza —the same who sold him the nine votes at his disposal in the conclave, for four mules laden with money and plate—"and we hope by your election to promote the glory of God, the repose of the Church, and the happiness of Christendom, since you were designated by the Omnipotent Himself as being more worthy than your brethren."

Brief as this reply was it afforded the new pope an opportunity to recover his self-possession, and he said humbly, folding his hands upon his breast:

"We trust that God will accord us His mighty aid, notwithstanding our weakness, and that He will do for us what He did for the Apostle, when He placed the keys of heaven in his hands, and entrusted to him the government of the Church, a burden which would be too heavy for a mortal without divine assistance. But God promised him that His Holy Spirit should be his guide; He will do as much for us I hope. And we doubt not that you will, one and all, exhibit the divine spirit of obedience which is due to the head of the

Church, in imitation of that which Christ's flock were compelled to show to the prince of the apostles."

When he had finished, Alexander arrayed himself in pontifical garb and ordered the slips of paper upon which his name was written in Latin to be thrown from the windows of the Vatican, as if to bear to the four corners of the earth the news of the great event which was to change the face of Italy.

The same day couriers were despatched to all the European courts.

Cæsar Borgia learned of his father's election at the University of Pisa, where he was a student. In his ambitious dreams he had often dwelt upon the possibility of such an occurrence, and his joy was almost beyond bounds. He was at this time a young man of some twenty-two years, skilled in all bodily exercises, especially in feats of arms; he could ride the most unmanageable horses without a saddle, and cut off the head of a bull with a single blow of his sword. He was arrogant, jealous and deceitful and, in the words of Tommasi, great among the impious as his brother Francesco was good among the great. Of his features, different authors who were his contemporaries left descriptions which vary widely. Some painted him as a monster of ugliness, while others, on the contrary, cannot praise his beauty too highly. The explanation of this seeming contradiction lies in the fact that at certain times in the year, especially in spring, his face was covered with pustules, which made him a horribly disgusting object while they lasted; but at other times he was the black-haired youth with pale face and fawn-colored beard whom Raphael has shown us in his fine portrait of him. Historians, chroniclers and painters, however, are all agreed as to his piercing, masterful glance, in which there shone an

ever-burning flame, imparting to it something infernal and uncanny. Such was the man whose wildest hopes fate had brought to fruition, and who took for his device:

"*Aut Cæsar aut nihil.*"

Cæsar traveled post to Rome with some of his close friends; the marvelous effect of the change in his fortune was apparent in the respectful humility with which he was everywhere greeted as soon as he reached the gates of the city. At the Vatican the respectful demeanor of those whom he encountered was even more marked; the great men bowed to the ground before him as one greater than themselves, and the result of all this homage was to arouse his impatience to such an extent that he hurried at once to the pope's presence to kiss his feet, without taking time to visit his mother or any other member of his family. His father had been notified of his arrival, and was awaiting him in the centre of a numerous and brilliant circle of cardinals, with his three brothers standing behind him.

His Holiness greeted him pleasantly, but did not indulge in any demonstrations of paternal affection; he simply stooped and kissed him on the forehead and asked him some questions concerning his health and his journey. Cæsar replied that he was very well and entirely at the service of his Holiness; and that, so far as his journey was concerned, any little inconvenience or fatigue he had suffered was much more than atoned for by his extreme gratification at the privilege of bending the knee in reverential worship before an incumbent of the chair of St. Peter who was in every way so worthy to fill it. With these words, leaving Cæsar on his knees and resuming his own seat, from which he had risen in order to embrace him, the Pope composed his features

into an expression of great seriousness, and spoke as follows, in a sufficiently loud tone to be heard by all, and so slowly that everyone could remember and weigh well every word:

"We are very sure, Cæsar, that you rejoice heartily to behold us raised to this great eminence, so far above our deserts, to which it has pleased God, in His wisdom, to call us. It is due to us that you should so rejoice, in the first place because of our past and present affection for you, and secondly, because you may expect to receive from our pontifical hand such benefactions as your good works show you to be worthy of. But if your joy—and we say this to you as we have said it to your brother—if your joy is founded upon other considerations, you have made a great mistake, Cæsar, and will find yourself wofully deceived. We aspired with undue ardor, it may be, to the papal throne, and we humbly confess it in this presence; to attain our end we adopted every means which human ingenuity could suggest, but we acted as we did taking a solemn oath to our own conscience that when we had once reached the goal, we would follow no other path than that which leads to the truest service of God and the greatest glory of the Holy See, to the end that the glorious memory of our future deeds may efface the shameful memory of what we have done in the past. In this way, I trust, we shall leave a path marked out for our successors on which they will find the footsteps of a true pope, if not the traces of a saint.

"God, who gave His sanction to the means we adopted, now looks to us for the fitting result, and we are disposed to liquidate in full the great debt we have contracted to Him; therefore we do not propose to incite His justice to stern reprisals by fraudulent practices. There is but one thing which could operate as

a hindrance to our good intentions; that would be too great an interest in your fortunes. Thus we have armed ourselves in advance against the influence of the ties of blood, and we have prayed God to guide our feet that we stumble not in our dealings with you; for a pope cannot tread the path of nepotism without falling, and he cannot fall without striking a heavy blow at the honor of the Holy See. We shall bemoan to the end of our days the errors to which we owe our knowledge of this truth, and God grant that our uncle, Calixtus, of blessed memory, be not carrying to-day in purgatory the burden of sins of which we were more guilty than he! Alas! he was rich with every virtue, his intentions were of the best, but he loved his own family too well, and of all his family, he loved ourself the best. He allowed this love for all his kindred to lead him blindly, and he concentrated upon a few heads only, and those the least worthy perhaps, the benefactions which should have gone to satisfy the just claims of a great number. In brief, he bestowed upon our family treasures which it was wrong for him to amass at the expense of the poor, or which he should, at least, have devoted to a better use. He despoiled the domains of the Church, which were restricted enough before, of the Duchy of Spoleto and other rich possessions in order to make them feudatory to us, and he placed upon our weak shoulders the vice-chancellorship, the vice-prefecture of Rome, the vicar-generalship of the Church, and numberless other of the more important functions, which, instead of being thus monopolized by us, should have been conferred upon those whose merits qualified them therefor. There were those, too, who were raised to eminent station on our recommendation, who had no other claim thereto than the too partial patronage

accorded them by us, while others were excluded for no other reason than the jealousy which their noteworthy qualifications inspired in our mind.

"In order to wrest the Kingdom of Naples from Ferdinand of Aragon, he kindled a terrible war, the fortunate issue of which had no other result than to add to our fortune, while a disastrous issue could not have failed to bring discredit and shame upon the Holy See. In short, by allowing himself to be swayed at will by those who sacrificed the public good to their private interests, he caused great harm, not only to the papal throne, not only to his own renown, but, most lamentable of all, to his conscience. And yet, O all-wise judgments of God! although he devoted himself so earnestly and untiringly to establishing our fortune upon a firm basis, he had no sooner left vacant the lofty position which we occupy to-day than we were cast down from the height to which we had ascended and given over to the fury of the people and the vindictive hatred of those Roman nobles who looked upon themselves as insulted by our amiable partiality for their enemies. Thus it came about, Cæsar, not only that we were thrown down, as I said but now, from the summit of grandeur which we had attained, and deprived of the worldly goods and the dignities which our uncle had heaped at our feet, but that we and our friends, in order to save our lives, were fain to condemn ourselves to voluntary exile, which alone made it possible for us to avoid the tempest evoked by the disclosure of our too great fortune. This was to our mind conclusive proof that, inasmuch as God has no difficulty in confounding the plans of His creatures when those plans are unjust, it is a great mistake for a pontiff to devote himself more earnestly to the advancement of a family which can endure but a few short

years at most, than to the true glory of the Church, which is eternal. And, furthermore, it proved that those politicians are egregious fools, who, when they are entrusted with a government which was not inherited by them and does not pass to their heirs, erect the edifice of their greatness upon any other foundations than upon the consistent display of lofty virtue for the benefit of all alike, and who think to assure the long duration of their power by any other means than those which hold in check the unexpected whirlwind, which, springing up during a period of perfect calm, may blow up a hurricane—may, that is to say, conjure up a host of enemies, any one of whom, if in deadly earnest, will do them more injury than the deceptive demonstrations of assistance from a hundred so-called friends can undo.

"If you and your brothers choose to follow the praiseworthy course which we have laid before you, you will form no wish which will not be gratified on the instant; but if you adopt the opposite course, if you have cherished hopes that our affection will make us indulgent to your dissolute life, you will very soon have abundant proof that we hold our high office for the behoof of the Church, not of our family, and that, as the vicar of Christ on earth, we propose to do what we shall deem to be for the good of Christendom, and not what you may deem to be for your interest; and with this understanding, Cæsar, receive our pontifical blessing."

With these words, Alexander VI. rose, laid his hands upon the head of his son, who was still kneeling, and withdrew to his apartments, without requesting him to follow.

The young man was struck dumb by this long harangue, which corresponded so ill with his expectations, and which destroyed his dearest hopes at a blow. He

rose to his feet, dizzily, and staggering like a drunken man, and hurried away from the Vatican to seek his mother, of whom he had not thought at first, but to whom he turned in his perplexity.

The Vanozza had all the vices and all the virtues of a Spanish courtesan, superstitiously devoted to the worship of the Madonna, fond of her children to the point of weakness, and slavishly submissive to the will of Rodrigo, in whatever direction it was manifested; but she trusted with all her soul in the permanence of a power which had not failed her in thirty years, and, like the serpent, she was certain of suffocating with her folds, when she could not fascinate with her glance. She knew the profound hypocrisy of her old lover, and consequently had no trouble in allaying Cæsar's fears.

Lucrezia was with Vanozza when Cæsar arrived; under the very eyes of their mother the young people exchanged a kiss of more than fraternal warmth, and before they separated they made an appointment for the same evening. Lucrezia was separated from her husband, to whom Rodrigo paid a pension, and lived in perfect freedom at her palace on Via-del-Pellegrino.

At the appointed hour Cæsar made his appearance at her abode, but he found his brother Francesco there before him. The two young men had never been fond of each other, but as their hearts were of entirely different mould Francesco's hatred was but the instinctive dread of the stag for the hunter; while Cæsar's was the craving for vengeance and thirst for blood which never die in the heart of the tiger. The brothers embraced nevertheless, the one in a spirit of good-will, the other hypocritically; but at the moment of meeting, the thought of their twofold rivalry in the good graces of their father and their sister brought a burning blush to

Francesco's cheeks, and a deathly pallor to those of Cæsar. They both sat down, each determined not to take his leave before the other, when there was a knock at the door, and a rival was announced before whom both had no choice but to withdraw; it was their father.

Vanozza did well to reassure Cæsar. To say truth, Alexander VI., while declaiming against the abuse of nepotism, had already formed a shrewd idea of the use to which he might put his sons and his daughter politically; for he knew that he could safely rely upon Cæsar and Lucrezia for anything he might ask, if not upon Francesco and Guiffry.

Indeed the sister was the fitting complement of the brother, with a licentious imagination, a scoffer at religion by nature, and ambitious from self-interest, Lucrezia had a greedy craving for debauchery, flattery, titles, gold, jewelry, soft stuffs, and superb palaces. A true Spaniard for all her fair hair, a true courtesan beneath her demure exterior, she had the head of a Madonna of Raphael, and the heart of Messalina; thus was she dear to Rodrigo, both as daughter and as mistress, for he saw reflected in her, as in a magic mirror, all his own passions and all his own vices. Lucrezia and Cæsar were to him as the apple of his eye, and with him they formed the diabolical trinity which sat for eleven years upon the papal throne, an impious parody of the Holy Trinity.

However, at first there was nothing to give the lie to Alexander's enunciation of the principles by which he proposed to govern his actions, in his harangue to Cæsar; the first year of his pontificate surpassed the hopes of which the Romans formed at the time of his election. He provided for stocking the public granaries with such liberality that from time immemorial there had not been such marvelous abundance, and in order that the lowest

classes might share in the general good fortune, he furnished funds from his private store to enable the very paupers to partake of this feast from which they had so long been excluded.

The public security was provided for in the early days of his reign, by a vigorous and vigilant police force, and by a court composed of four learned doctors of irreproachable reputation, whose duty it was to take cognizance of all the crimes committed at night, which were so common under the preceding incumbent that their very number made apprehension impossible. Their earliest judgments offered a salutary warning by their vigorous severity, which neither the rank nor wealth of the culprits availed to lighten. This contrasted so strongly with the corruption of the last reign (when the vice-chamberlain was accustomed to retort in public to those who reproached him for the venality of the officers of the law:—"God does not desire the death of a sinner, but that he should live and pay"),—that the capital of the Christian world believed for a moment that the halcyon days of the early popes had returned.

Thus, after a year of power, Alexander VI. had won back the spiritual credit which his predecessors had lost. It remained for him to establish his political credit upon a firm foundation, in order to accomplish the first part of his stupendous plan. To attain that end, he had the choice of two alternatives—alliance or conquest. He thought best to begin by seeking alliances. The Aragonese nobleman who married Lucrezia when she was only the daughter of Cardinal Borgia was not a man of sufficient eminence either by birth, wealth or intellect, to exert any influence in promoting the schemes of Pope Alexander VI.; so the separation became a divorce, and Lucrezia Borgia was free to marry again.

Alexander VI. undertook two negotiations at once. He needed an ally who could keep watch in his interest upon the actions of the States which surrounded him.

Giovanni Sforza, grandson of Alexander Sforza, who was the brother of Francesco I., called the Great, Duke of Milan, was Lord of Pesaro. The topographical situation of that place on the shore of the Adriatic, between Florence and Venice was wonderfully well adapted for his purposes, so he turned his eyes thither in the first place, and as Sforza's interests were one with his, he soon became Lucrezia's second husband.

At the same time overtures had been made to Alphonso of Aragon, heir presumptive to the crown of Naples, looking to an alliance between his natural daughter, Donna Sancia, and Guiffry, the pope's third son; but as the aged Ferdinand desired to gain the utmost possible advantage from the alliance, he dragged out the negotiations to an interminable length, objecting that the children were not of marriageable age, and that there was consequently no occasion for haste in the matter of their betrothal, however much he might desire the honor of such a connection. The matter remained at that point to the great dissatisfaction of Alexander VI., who was not deceived as to the real meaning of this postponement, but construed it as a refusal, which it really was. He and Ferdinand thus continued to occupy their former positions, as political gamesters of equal skill, waiting until the cards should take a favorable turn for one or the other. Fortune was on Alexander's side.

Italy, although calm to all outward appearance, felt instinctively that the calmness was nothing more than that which ordinarily precedes a storm. She was too rich and too happy not to be an object of envy to all

the other nations. The negligence and jealousy of the Florentine Republic had not yet transformed the plains of Pisa into a swamp, the wars of the Colonna and Orsini had not changed the fertile Roman Campagna into an untilled desert; the Marquis of Marignano had not razed to the ground a hundred and twenty villages in the Republic of Sienna alone; the *maremma* was injurious to health, but had not become deadly; and Flavio Blondo, writing in 1450 of Ostia, which has no more than thirty inhabitants to-day, said of that city that it was somewhat less flourishing than in the time of the Romans, when it could boast of fifty thousand.

The Italian peasants were, perhaps, the happiest part of the population. Instead of being scattered about over the country, they lived in villages, enclosed by walls, which helped to protect their harvests, their cattle and their implements; such of their houses as are standing to-day, prove that they lived more comfortably, and that their dwellings were more artistic and in better taste than those of the bourgeoisie in our cities at the present time. Then, too, this union of interests, and concentration of individuals in fortified villages gradually bestowed upon them an importance which the French peasants and German serfs did not enjoy. They bore arms, had a common treasury, elected their magistrates, and when they fought, it was to defend their native land.

Commerce, too, was in a no less flourishing condition than agriculture. Italy, in those days, was covered with factories for working silk, wool, hemp, furs, alum, sulphur and bitumen; such of these materials as were not indigenous to Italy were brought to her seaports from the Black Sea, Egypt, Spain and France, and frequently were shipped back to the place whence they came, after

their value had been doubled by the labor and skill of the practiced craftsman. The rich man brought his goods, and the poor man his labor; the one was sure that he would not lack hands for the work, and the other that he would not lack work for his hands.

Nor had art fallen behind her sisters. Dante, Giotto, Brunelleschi and Donatello were dead, but Ariosto, Raphael, Bramante and Michel Angelo were rising above the horizon; Rome, Florence and Naples had inherited the master-pieces of antiquity, and the manuscripts of Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides had taken their places beside the marbles of Xantippus, Phidias and Praxiteles, by virtue of the conquest of Mahomet II.

The principal sovereigns of Italy, as they let their eyes wander over these abundant harvests, these wealthy villages, these flourishing factories, and these marvelous works of art, and then fixed them upon the savage, impoverished, warlike peoples by whom they were surrounded, realized that they were destined to become some day to the other nations what America was to Spain—that is to say, a rich gold-mine to be worked for all it could be made to yield. Consequently, as early as 1480, Naples, Milan, Florence and Ferrara formed an offensive and defensive league, ready to withstand the attacks of foes within as well as without—on the peninsula itself, as well as beyond the Alps. Ludovico Sforza, who was most deeply interested in maintaining this league, because he was nearest to France, whence the attack seemed most likely to come, saw in the election of a new pope an additional means, not only of solidifying the league, but of exhibiting it to Europe in all its might.

Upon every new election, it was customary for all the Christian nations to send a special embassy to Rome, to

renew their respective oaths of allegiance. It occurred to Ludovico Sforza to arrange that the ambassadors of the four allied powers should enter Rome on the same day, and that a single one of them, the representative of the King of Naples, for instance, should be delegated to take the oath in the name of all four.

Unfortunately, this plan consorted ill with the magnificent plans of Pietro dei Medici. That vain-glorious young man, who was the chosen ambassador of the Florentine Republic, saw in the mission his countrymen had entrusted to him an opportunity to gratify his love of display, and to exhibit his vast wealth. From tne day of his appointment his palace overflowed with tailors, jewelers, and purveyors of fine stuffs; and the result was a superb wardrobe, every garment of which was adorned with precious stones from the family treasure-chest. All his jewels, probably the finest in Italy, were sewn upon the coats of his pages, and one of them, his favorite attendant, was to wear a pearl necklace, worth the enormous sum of one hundred thousand ducats—nearly a million of our present money! The Bishop of Arezzo, Gentili, once the preceptor of Lorenzo dei Medici, was Pietro's colleague in the embassy, and upon him devolved the duty of acting as spokesman; he had prepared an elaborate harangue, and relied as confidently upon his eloquence to charm the ears of his hearers, as Pietro upon his superb display to dazzle their eyes. But Gentili's eloquence would go for naught, if the ambassador of the King of Naples were to be the spokesman, and Pietro's pompous magnificence would be altogether thrown away if he entered Rome in a crowd with the other ambassadors. These two weighty considerations, which were endangered by the suggestion of the Duke of Milan, changed the whole face of Italy.

Ludovico Sforza had already procured Ferdinand's consent to his plan, when the old king, at the solicitation of the Medicis, suddenly retracted his promise. Sforza inquired as to the reason of this sudden change, and learned that it was Pietro's influence which had outweighed his own. As he never dreamed of the real motives for his opposition, he saw in it proof of the existence of a secret league against himself, and attributed the change of policy to Lorenzo's death. Whatever the explanation, however, the result was visibly prejudicial to him, as Florence, the long-time ally of Milan, deserted her for Naples. He determined to throw a counter-poise into the scales, and disclosed the whole affair to Alexander VI., suggesting to him the formation of an offensive and defensive alliance, to which the Republic of Venice should be admitted; Duke Hercules III. of Ferrara was to be called upon at the same time to declare for one or the other of the two leagues.

Alexander, who was aggrieved by Ferdinand's treatment of him, accepted Sforza's proposition, and a treaty of confederation was signed April 22, 1493, whereby the new allies agreed to maintain an army of twenty thousand horse and ten thousand foot to preserve the public peace. Ferdinand looked with apprehension upon the formation of this league; but he believed that he had a sure means of neutralizing its effects by despoiling Ludovico Sforza of his power, which, although it could not yet be called a usurpation, had extended long beyond the proper limit of its duration; for, although young Galeasso, his nephew, had reached the age of twenty-two, Sforza still continued to act as regent. He, therefore, called upon him in positive terms to turn over the sovereign power to his nephew, under pain of being declared a usurper.

It was a terrible blow; but its danger for him who dealt it lay in the probability that it would drive Ludovico into one of those political combinations, in which he was an adept, and from which he never shrank, no matter how hazardous they might be. And that was what actually happened; Sforza, disturbed in the quiet possession of his duchy, determined to aim a blow at the stability of Ferdinand's seat upon his throne.

Nothing could be easier of accomplishment. He was well aware of the warlike inclinations of Charles VIII. and he was familiar with the claims of France to the Kingdom of Naples. He sent two ambassadors to urge the young king to assert the rights of the House of Anjou, which the House of Aragon had usurped, and increased the temptation to engage in this distant and hazardous enterprise by offering him the privilege of free passage through his territories.

With Charles VIII.'s well-known character, such a proposition could not fail of acceptance. A magnificent prospect lay spread out before him as if by enchantment, for what Ludovico Sforza offered was really the lordship of the Mediterranean, a protectorate over the whole of Italy; and an open road, by way of Naples and Venice to the conquest of Turkey or of the Holy Land, according as he should decide to avenge the disaster of Nicopolis or of Mansourah. The proposition, therefore, was eagerly welcomed, and a secret treaty of alliance was signed by Count Charles Belgiojoso and the Count of Calazzo for Sforza, and the Bishop of Saint-Malo and the Seneschal of Beaucaire for Charles VIII.

The terms of the treaty were:

That the King of France should attempt the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples;

That the Duke of Milan should give the King of France the right to pass through his territories, and should accompany him with five hundred lances;

That the Duke of Milan should allow the King of France to equip as many ships as he wished at Genoa;

That the Duke of Milan should loan the King of France two hundred thousand ducats to be handed him when he set out upon the expedition.

Charles VIII., on his side, agreed:

To defend the personal right of Ludovico Sforza to rule over the Duchy of Milan against whomsoever should undertake to deprive him thereof;

To leave in the town of Asti, which belonged to the Duc d'Orléans by inheritance from his grandmother, Valentine Visconti, two hundred French lances, who would always be at hand to bear aid to the house of Sforza; and

To hand over to his ally the principality of Tarento immediately after the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples.

The treaty was no sooner concluded than Charles VIII., who took a somewhat exaggerated view of the benefit to accrue to him under it, set about clearing away all the obstacles which might delay or impede his expedition—a very necessary precaution, as his relations with the great powers were far from what he would have liked them to be.

In the first place, Henry VII. of England, had landed at Calais with a formidable army and was threatening to invade France anew.

In the second place, Ferdinand and Isabella, of Spain, if they had not helped to bring about the fall of the House of Anjou, had, at least assisted the Aragon branch with men and money.

Lastly, the war with the King of the Romans had taken on a new lease of life because of Charles VIII.'s sending back Margaret of Burgundy to Maximilian, her father, and his subsequent marriage to Anne of Brittany.

By the treaty of Etaples, November 3, 1492, Henry VII. agreed to put an end to his alliance with the King of the Romans, and bound himself not to pursue his conquests. This cost Charles VIII. seven hundred and forty-five thousand golden crowns, in addition to the expense of the war in Brittany, for which he reimbursed Henry.

By the treaty of Barcelona, January 19, 1493, Ferdinand, the Catholic, and Isabella, agreed not to furnish assistance to their cousin, Ferdinand of Naples, and to place no obstacles in the way of the French King's plans in Italy. These concessions cost Charles VIII. Perpignan, the county of Roussillon, and Cerdagne, which Joanna of Aragon gave to Louis XI. in pledge for a loan of three hundred thousand ducats, and which he refused to return on repayment of that sum, so well did the old royal fox appreciate the value of those gates of the Pyrenees, which he could close from within in case of war.

Lastly, by the treaty of Senlis, May 23, 1493, Maximilian consented to forgive France for the affront he had received from her king. The price of this condescension was the counties of Burgundy, Artois, Charolais and the lordship of Noyers, which Charles received as Margaret's marriage portion, together with the towns of Aire, Hesdin, and Béthune, which he agreed to deliver to Philip of Austria on the day that he attained his majority.

By dint of these sacrifices, the young king found

himself at peace with his neighbors and in a position to undertake the enterprise suggested by Ludovico Sforza, which enterprise owed its origin, as we have said, to the refusal of the Florentine and Neapolitan embassies to accede to his plan of a joint entry into Rome, and the appointment of one spokesman for all, said refusal, in turn, being inspired by Pietro dei Medici's desire to display his superb jewels, and Gentili's to deliver his harangue.

Thus the vanity of a preceptor and the vain-glory of his pupil, were to cause a convulsion of the earth, extending from the Gulf of Tarento to the Pyrenees.

Alexander VI., standing at the centre of this tremendous convulsion, of which Italy had not yet felt the first shock, took advantage of the instinctive absorption of men's minds in what was impending to disregard for the first time the principles set forth in the grandiloquent speech which we reported above, by bestowing the red hat upon his nephew, Giovanni Borgia, who was made Archbishop of Mont Real and Governor of Rome by the last pope. This promotion, which was allowed to pass without comment in view of the antecedents of the person in question, was intended as a sort of experiment, and its success encouraged him soon after to raise Cæsar Borgia to the Archbishopric of Valencia, a benefice which he, himself, held before becoming pope. But in this instance the trouble was caused by the recipient of the favor. The impetuous, hot-headed youth, who had all the instincts and all the vices of a captain of *condottieri*, found it very difficult even to pretend to possess any of the virtues of a churchman; but as he knew from his father's own mouth that the higher secular dignities were reserved for his elder brother, he decided to accept what was offered him for fear he would get nothing else.

One result was, however, that his hatred for Francesco increased tenfold, for thenceforth he was his rival in ambition as well as in love.

Suddenly, Alexander, at the moment when he expected it least, found the old King Ferdinand making friendly overtures to him again. The pope was too clever a politician to bid them welcome until he knew what they portended; he soon learned the plot that was being concocted at the French court against the King of Naples, and everything was clear to his mind.

Thereupon he at once imposed certain conditions as the price of his alliance.

He demanded that the hand of Donna Sancia, Alphonso's natural daughter, should be bestowed upon Guiffry, his third son.

He demanded that she should bring to her spouse as her dowry the principality of Squillace, and the county of Cariati, with an income of ten thousand ducats and the office of prothonotary, one of the seven great offices of the crown which were independent of the royal authority.

He demanded for his eldest son, whom Ferdinand, the Catholic, had already created Duke of Gandia, the principality of Tricarico, the counties of Chiaramonte, Lauria, and Carinola, with an income of twelve thousand ducats, and the first of the seven great offices which should fall vacant.

He demanded that Virginio Orsino, his ambassador at the Neapolitan court, should obtain the third of these great offices, which was that of Constable, and the very greatest of all.

Finally, he demanded that Guilio della Rovere, one of the five cardinals who protested against his election, and who had entrenched himself at Ostia,

where the oak which gave him his name and formed his crest is still carved on all the walls, should be driven from the town, and that the town should be turned over to him.

Everything that Alexander demanded was granted.

In return he simply bound himself not to deprive the House of Aragon of the investiture of the Kingdom of Naples, which his predecessors had bestowed upon that house. It seemed a heavy price to pay for a mere promise, but that promise, if it were kept, ensured the legitimacy of Ferdinand's reign. For Naples was a fief of the Holy See, and the pope alone possessed the power to determine the justice of each competitor's claims; the continuance of the investiture, therefore, was of the utmost importance to the House of Aragon, at a time when the House of Anjou was arming to dispossess her.

Thus we see that in this first brief year of his pontificate Alexander had taken long strides in the direction of increasing the temporal power of the Holy See. To be sure, he possessed personally the least extensive territories of all the Italian powers, but through the marriage of his daughter, Lucrezia, with the Lord of Pesaro, he already had one hand upon Venice, while the other reached to the farthest limits of Calabria by means of Donna Sancia's marriage to the Prince of Squillace, and the cession of territory to the Duke of Gandia.

When this treaty, which brought him such great increase of power and influence was signed, he made Cæsar, who complained bitterly that he was always omitted in the distribution of his father's favors, Cardinal of Santa-Maria-Novella. But as there was no precedent in the history of the Church for clothing a

bastard in the purple, the pope found a few false witnesses who swore that Cæsar was the son of Count Ferdinand of Castile; truly an invaluable man was Don Manuel Melchiori, who played the rôle of father with the same imperturbable gravity with which he formerly played the husband.

The nuptials of the illegitimate offspring of the pope and of Alphonso of Aragon were celebrated with great splendor and with the twofold pomp of royalty and Holy Church. As the pope had stipulated that the newly married pair should live at Rome, Cardinal Cæsar Borgia undertook to make fitting arrangements for their arrival and reception, while Lucrezia, whose influence over her father was vastly greater than a woman had ever before been known to wield at the papal court, determined to do everything in her power to add to the *éclat* of the occasion. Cæsar therefore went out to receive the young people with a brilliant, and richly equipped escort of nobles and cardinals, while Lucrezia awaited their arrival in an apartment of the Vatican with the loveliest and noblest of the women of Rome. A throne was erected there for the pope and, at his feet, cushions for Lucrezia and Donna Sancia.

"The general appearance of the assemblage," says Tommaso Tommasi, "and the conversation which was carried on there for some hours would have led one to think that the occasion was an audience given by some superb royal voluptuary of ancient Assyria rather than the severely simple consistory of a Roman pontiff, who ought, in everything he does, to add lustre to the sanctity of the name he bears. But," ironically adds the same historian, "if the Pentecostal vigil was marked by these seemly performances, the ceremonies with which the Descent of the Holy Spirit was celebrated on the

following day were no less seemly, and in accordance with the true spirit of religious observance; for this is what the master of ceremonies has to say thereof in his daily journal:

"'The pope entered the chapel of the Holy Apostles, and by his side upon the marble desk where the canons of St. Peter's are accustomed to intone the Epistle and Gospel, were seated his daughter, Lucrezia, and Sancia, his daughter-in-law, while round about them, to the endless shame of the Church, and the scandal of the people, were many other Roman women much more worthy to dwell in the domain of Messalina than in St. Peter's city.'"

Thus, at Rome and at Naples, the rulers slept while the storm was gathering; thus they wasted time and money in vain and profitless display, while the French, wide awake and on the alert, were already waving aloft the torches with which they were to set Italy on fire.

The fact that Charles VIII. was bent on conquest was no longer matter of doubt to anybody. The young king had sent to the different Italian States an embassy consisting of Perron de Baschi, Briconnet, D'Aubigny, and the president of the parliament of Provence. Their mission was to ask the co-operation of the Italian princes in restoring the House of Anjou to its rights in the Kingdom of Naples.

The embassy applied at first to the Venetians, whose assistance and advice they invoked in behalf of the king, their master. But the Venetians, true to their system of politics, which had procured for them the name of the "Jews of Christendom," replied that they could not promise assistance to the young king, as they were obliged to be always on the watch for aggressions from the Turk; and as to giving him advice, it would

be altogether too presumptuous for them to offer it to a prince who was surrounded with such experienced generals, and such wise ministers.

Perron de Baschi, failing to obtain any other reply set out for Florence. Pietro dei Medici received him at an extraordinary session of his council, to which he had summoned for this solemn occasion, not only the Seventy, but also all the *gonfalonniers*, who had sat in the assembly of nobles for the past thirty-four years. The French ambassador acquitted himself of his errand, which was to request that the republic would permit the French army to pass over its territories, and would agree to furnish the necessary provisions and forage for cash. The "Magnificent" republic made answer that if Charles VIII. were proposing to march against the Turks rather than against Ferdinand, they would be only too eager to grant all that he desired; but that they were bound to the House of Aragon by a treaty of alliance, and could not break it by such concessions as the King of France asked at their hands.

The ambassadors next went to Sienna. The poor little republic, terrified at being so honored as to be thought of, replied that it was their wish to maintain absolute neutrality; and that they were too weak to declare themselves beforehand either for or against such rivals, as they would naturally be compelled to side with the party which proved to be stronger.

Armed with this response, which had the merit of frankness, at least, the French envoys went on to Rome, and were granted an audience of the pope, whom they requested to invest their sovereign with the title of King of Naples.

Alexander replied that, inasmuch as his predecessors had so invested the princes of the House of Aragon, he

could not dispossess them unless he should be convinced that the House of Anjou had a stronger claim to the title than its present holder. He also reminded Perron de Bâschi that Naples was a fief of the Holy See and therefore the choice of her sovereign was the prerogative of the pope alone; so that to attack the present sovereign was virtually to attack the Church herself.

The result of the embassy, as will be seen, did not promise a large amount of assistance to Charles VIII., so he determined to rely entirely upon his ally Ludovico Sforza, and to leave all questions to be decided by the fortune of war.

The news of the death of Ferdinand which reached him about the same time confirmed him in that resolution. The old king, on his return from a hunting expedition, was attacked by a severe catarrhal cough, which brought him to death's door in two days, and on the twenty-fifth of January, 1494, he breathed his last, at the age of seventy, after a reign of thirty-six years, leaving the throne to his eldest son, Alphonso, who was at once named as his successor.

Ferdinand's decease did not belie his title of the "Happy," for he quitted the world just as the fortunes of his family were on the point of changing for the worse.

The new king, Alphonso, was no novice in the art of war; he had already fought against the Venetians and Florentines, and had driven the Turks out of Otianto; he was reputed, also, to be as subtle a manipulator as his father of the devious politics then so much in vogue at the various Italian courts; so that he did not despair of numbering among his allies the very one of his foes with whom he was at war when he first heard of the claims put forward by Charles VIII.; we refer to Bajazet II.

He consequently sent Camillo Pandone, one of his confidential ministers, to Bajazet, to impress upon him that the expedition to Italy was only a pretext, on the part of the King of France, to put himself in a more advantageous position with relation to the territories conquered by the Mahometans, and that when he was once upon the Adriatic, Charles had but a sail of a day or two to reach Macedonia, whence he could march upon Constantinople by land. He therefore asked Bajazet for six thousand horse and as many foot, to assist him in upholding their mutual interests, and agreed to pay them as long as they remained in Italy. Pandone was to be joined at Taranto by Giorgio Bucciarda, sent by Alexander VI., with instructions to appeal to the Turk for aid against the Christians, in the pope's name!

Meanwhile, pending the arrival of Bajazet's reply, which might be delayed for some months, Alphonso requested a meeting between the pope, Pietro dei Medici and himself, to take counsel concerning matters of urgent concern. They appointed to meet at Vicovaro, near Tivoli, and the three were punctually on hand at the appointed time and place.

Alphonso, before leaving Naples, laid out the plan of campaign for his sea forces, and gave his brother Frederic the command of a fleet of thirty-five galleys, eighteen large war vessels, and twelve smaller craft, with orders to wait at Livorno for the fleet which Charles VIII. was fitting out in the harbor of Genoa, and keep watch of its movements; he, therefore, desired particularly to concert with his allies a scheme of operations on land. He had at his immediate disposal, without reckoning the contingent to be furnished by his allies, one hundred squadrons of heavy cavalry, twenty men to the squadron, and three thousand cross-bowmen and light horse.

He proposed, consequently, that he should march at once into Lombardy, excite a revolution in favor of his nephew, Galeasso, and drive Ludovico Sforza out of Milan before he could receive assistance from France; so that Charles VIII., immediately upon crossing the Alps, would find an enemy waiting, whom he would have to fight, instead of the ally who had promised him a free passage, and men and money.

This was the proposition of a clever politician as well as a bold captain, but as each one of the three had come to the meeting to promote his own interests, and not for the good of all, it was coldly received by Pietro dei Medici, who found that no more prominent part was assigned him in the war than that to which an attempt had been made to relegate him in the matter of the embassy, and was flatly rejected by Alexander VI., who proposed to use Alphonso's troops for his own ends. He reminded him that one of the conditions of his agreement not to disturb his title to the crown of Naples was that Cardinal Giulio della Rovere was to be expelled from Ostia, and that place to be delivered to him. Moreover, the benefits which had accrued to Virginio Orsini as the result of his embassy to Naples, had excited the ire of Prosper and Fabricio Colonna against this favorite of Alexander VI., and almost all the villages in the neighborhood of Rome belonged to them. Now, the pope could not exist in the midst of such powerful enemies, and it was certainly of the utmost importance that he who was the head and heart of a league of which the others were but the body and limbs, should lead a tranquil life; therefore, the first and most important point was to deliver him from them all.

Although Alphonso clearly understood the reasons for Pietro dei Medici's cold reception of his plan, while

Alexander did not even put him to the trouble of seeking for his, he was none the less compelled to bow to their decisions, and leave the former to defend the Apennines against the French, while he assisted the other to rid himself of his Roman neighbors. He therefore pressed on the siege of Ostia, and gave a part of his light horse to Virginio, who was already in command of two hundred of the pope's men-at-arms; this little force was to be stationed about Rome, and keep the Colonna to their allegiance. He divided the rest of his troops into two parts, one of which he entrusted to his son Ferdinand, with instructions to stir up the petty princes throughout Romagna to raise and equip the contingents they had promised, while he with the other watched the defiles of the Abruzzi.

On the twenty-third of April, at three in the morning, Alexander was rid of the first and most inveterate of his enemies. Giulio della Rovere, realizing the impossibility of holding out longer against Alphonso's troops, went on board a brigantine which set him ashore again at Savona.

From that day Virginio Orsino carried on, without cessation, the famous guerrilla warfare, which has made of the Roman Campagna the most poetic desert in the whole world.

Meanwhile, Charles VIII. was at Lyons, not only uncertain as to the best route for him to take into Italy, but beginning to reflect upon the many hazardous chances of such an expedition. Except from Ludovico Sforza he had utterly failed to find sympathy or co-operation anywhere, so that it seemed more than probable that he might expect to find himself opposed, not by Naples alone, but by all Italy. He had expended in his preparations almost all the money he had at his

disposal; Madame de Beaujeu and the Duc de Bourbon were making a great outcry against the undertaking, and Briconnet, who originally advised it, no longer dared to support it. More irresolute than ever, the king had already countermanded the orders issued to several bodies of troops who were in movement, when Cardinal Giulio della Rovere, driven from Italy by the pope, arrived at Lyons and was granted audience by the king.

The cardinal hastened to the king's presence, consumed by hatred, but with hope in his heart, and found him on the point of abandoning the project upon which this bitter foe of Alexander VI. based all his dreams of vengeance. He told Charles VIII. how his enemies were divided among themselves, and how each of them was pursuing his own private end. Pietro dei Medici, the gratification of his love of display, and the pope, the aggrandizement of his family. He reminded him that he had fleets all equipped in the harbors of Villefranche, Marseilles, and Genoa, whose expensive armaments would all go for naught, and that he had sent his grand equerry Pierre d'Urfé on ahead to prepare luxurious apartments in the Spenola and Doria palaces. Lastly, he impressed upon him that ridicule and abuse would be heaped upon him from all sides if he abandoned an undertaking he had proclaimed with such a flourish of trumpets, and to prepare for which he was obliged to conclude these treaties of peace so burdensome as those with Henry VII., Maximilian, and Ferdinand, the Catholic. Giulio della Rovere reckoned wisely when he appealed to the young king's pride; Charles did not hesitate another instant. He ordered his cousin, the Duc d'Orléans, afterward Louis XII., to take command of the French fleet, and sail with it to Genoa; he

despatched a courier to Antoine de Bessay, Baron of Tricastel, calling upon him to march to Asti with the two thousand Swiss infantry he had levied in the Cantons; and he himself set out from Vienne, in Dauphiné, on the twenty-third of August, 1494, crossed the Alps at Mount Genève without meeting with the slightest attempt at opposition from anybody, and entered Piedmont and Montferrat, which were at that time governed each by a regent—the sovereigns of the two principalities, Charles-Jean Aimé and Guillaume-Jean being but six and eight years of age respectively.

The regents came to meet Charles, one at Turin, the other at Casal, each attended by a numerous and brilliant retinue, and each covered with jewels and precious stones. Charles, who was perfectly well aware that, notwithstanding all their effusive friendliness, they had both concluded treaties with his enemy, Alphonso of Naples, received them with entire courtesy and begged them to prove the friendship for himself which they were so loud in protesting, by loaning him the diamonds with which they were bespangled from head to foot. The regents could not do otherwise than comply with a request which was equivalent to a command. They took off their necklaces, rings and ear-rings, for which Charles gave them a receipt in detail and then put them in pledge for twenty-four thousand ducats. With that sum in his strong-box he set out for Asti, of which the Duc d'Orléans had, as we have said, retained the sovereignty; and there he was joined by Ludovico Sforza and Prince Hercules of Este, Duke of Ferrara, his father-in-law. They brought with them not only the troops and money promised, but a retinue composed of the most beautiful women in Italy.

The balls, fêtes, and joustings began on a scale of

magnificence surpassing anything that had ever been seen in Italy. But they were suddenly interrupted by the King's illness. It was the first outbreak in Italy of the contagion brought from the New World by Christopher Columbus, and called by the Italians, the French plague, and by the French the Italian plague. The probability is that a part of Columbus' crew, who came from Genoa or its neighborhood had already come back from America, bringing with them that awful scourge as the price to be paid for the rich mines of gold.

However, the King's indisposition did not prove to be so serious as was feared at first. He recovered in a few weeks and went on to Pavia, where the young Duke Giovanni Galeasso lay dying. He and the King of France were cousins-german, sons of two sisters of the House of Savoy, so that Charles could not in common decency refrain from paying him a visit. He went, therefore, to the castle where he dwelt, more like a prisoner than like its lord. He found him half-reclining upon a couch, pale and emaciated, by dissipation said some, by a slow, but deadly poison said others. But however desirous the poor youth may have been to complain of his fate, he dared say nothing, for his uncle, Ludovico Sforza, did not leave the King of France alone with him for an instant. But just as Charles was rising to take his leave, a door was thrown hastily open and gave entrance to a young woman, who threw herself at the King's feet. It was Galeasso's wife, and she implored her cousin to take no hostile step against her father, Alphonso, or her brother, Ferdinand. Sforza frowned anxiously and threateningly, for he did not know what impression this incident might produce upon his ally; but he was soon reassured. Charles replied that he had gone too far to recede, that the glory of his name, as

well as the interest of his realm was at stake, and that they were subjects of too great importance to be sacrificed to his feeling of compassion, although it was very deep and sincere. The poor woman, whose last hope was shattered, threw herself sobbing bitterly into her husband's arms, while Charles and Sforza left the room. Galeasso's doom was sealed.

Two days later Charles set out for Florence, accompanied by his ally, but they had gone no farther than Parma when they were overtaken by a courier, who informed Sforza that his nephew was dead. Ludovico at once apologized to Charles for leaving him to continue his march alone, but said that the matters which required his presence at Milan were of so great moment that he must return thither without an hour's delay. He had nothing less to do than ensure his own peaceable succession to the victim of his ambition.

Charles VIII. continued his journey, not without uneasiness. The sight of the dying prince had moved him deeply, for he was sure in his inmost heart that Sforza had murdered him, and a murderer might easily be a traitor. Thus he was marching through a strange country with a declared enemy in front of him and a doubtful friend in his rear. They were just beginning to enter the mountainous district and, as the army had no supply of provisions, but lived by foraging from day to day, the least forced halt would leave them without food. Immediately before them was Fivizzano, which was nothing but a long, straggling village, surrounded by a wall, but beyond Fivizzano were Sarzane and Pietra Santa, which were fortified places, looked upon as impregnable; furthermore, the country was unhealthy, especially in October, and produced nothing but oil, drawing its supply of grain even from other provinces,

so that a whole army might be wiped out there in a few days by famine and miasmatic air, without reckoning upon the means of resistance which the nature of the ground offered in profusion. The situation was a serious one, but the vain-glory of Pietro dei Medici came to Charles' assistance.

Pietro had, our readers will remember, entered into an undertaking to prevent the French from passing through Tuscany; but when he saw the enemy coming down from the Alps, he felt less confidence in his own strength, and appealed for help to the pope. But the report of the ultramontane invasion no sooner reached Romagna, than the Colonna declared that they were soldiers of the King of France and, assembling all the forces they could muster, took possession of Ostia, and there awaited the coming of the French fleet to cover their passage to Rome. The pope, therefore, instead of sending troops to Florence, was obliged to call in all the force at his command to guard the capital; but he did send word to Pietro that if Bajazet sent him the troops he had asked him for, he would place them at his disposal.

Pietro had come to no resolution and formed no plan, when he learned at the same moment two startling pieces of news. A jealous neighbor, the Marquis of Tordinovo, had pointed out to the French, the weak spot in the walls of Fivizzano, so that they had carried the place by assault, and put the garrison and the inhabitants to the sword. Furthermore, Gilbert de Montpensier, who was watching the coast to keep open communication between the French army and fleet, had fallen in with a detachment sent by Paul Orsino to reinforce the garrison of Sarzane and, after a sharp fight of an hour, cut it in pieces. No quarter was granted the prisoners, but every man that was taken was massacred.

It was the first time that the Italians, who were accustomed to the chivalrous modes of warfare of the fifteenth century, had come in contact with the terrible dwellers beyond the Alps, who were less advanced than they in civilization, and looked upon war as a matter of life and death and not as a scientific game. For this reason the news of these two butcheries caused a great sensation at Florence, the richest and most artistic city in Italy, as well as the most flourishing. Everyone pictured the French to himself as counterparts of the savage hordes of ancient times who extinguished fire with blood, and the prophetic words of Savonarola, who foretold the ultramontane invasion and the destruction which would follow in its wake, recurred to the minds of all. Thereupon the popular excitement rose to such a pitch that Pietro dei Medici, determined to obtain peace at any price, procured a decree from the authorities of the republic, to the effect that an embassy should be sent to the conqueror, and was so firmly resolved to place himself in the French king's hands that he secured his own appointment as one of the ambassadors. He left Florence in company with four others and, when he reached Pietra Santa, sent a request to Charles for a safe-conduct for himself alone. On the following day Briçonnet and De Piennes came to meet him, and took him before the King.

Notwithstanding his illustrious name, and the great power which he possessed, Pietro dei Medici, in the eyes of the French nobility, who considered it degrading to engage in any business or profession, was nothing more than a wealthy merchant, with whom it was not worth while to stand very strictly on ceremony. So Charles received him on horseback and asked him haughtily, in the tone of a master addressing his underling, whence

came the assurance which led him to refuse him passage through Tuscany. Pietro replied that his father, Lorenzo, concluded a treaty of alliance with Ferdinand of Naples, with the express consent of Louis XI. himself; and that he was compelled in honor to abide by the terms of that treaty; but that he did not propose to carry his devotion to the House of Aragon, and his opposition to that of France any farther, and was therefore ready to do whatever Charles might demand at his hands.

The King, who did not anticipate such profound humility, demanded that Sarzane should be put in his hands; Pietro consented without a moment's hesitation. Thereupon, the King, with a view of seeing how far the ambassador of the magnificent republic would carry his deference, replied that this concession was very far from satisfying him, and that he must have in addition the keys of Pietra Santa, Pisa, Librafatta, and Livorno. Pietro made no more demur than in the matter of Sarzane, and consented to hand over the places named upon Charles' simple word to restore them to him when the conquest of Naples was achieved.

Lastly, when Charles saw how very easy to deal with the negotiator sent to him proved to be, he demanded, as a final condition, but a *sine qua non* of his royal protection, that the magnificent republic should loan him the sum of two hundred thousand florins. Pietro, who was as free with the treasure as with fortresses, replied that his fellow-citizens would be happy to render their new ally this service.

Charles, thereupon, furnished him with a horse to ride and ordered him to go before him, and begin the fulfillment of his agreements by delivering to him the four strongholds he demanded. Pietro obeyed, and the

French army, under the guidance of the grandson of Cosmo the Great, and the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, continued its triumphal march through Tuscany.

On his arrival at Lucca, Pietro learned that the concessions he had made to the King of France had caused tremendous excitement at Florence. The magnificent republic thought that Charles would demand nothing more than a simple passage through their territory, so that the dissatisfaction at the news was universal, and was increased by the return of the other ambassadors whom Pietro did not so much as consult as to the steps he took.

Pietro himself, deeming his return to Florence to be essential, requested Charles' permission to precede him thither. As he had fulfilled all his promises, except the loan, which must necessarily be negotiated at Florence, the King made no objection, and on the evening of the day that he left the army, Pietro stole into his palace on Via Larga, incognito.

The next day he proposed to make his appearance before the seignorial body, but when he reached the square of the old palace, he was met by the gonfalonnier Jacobi di Nerli, who told him that it was useless for him to try to go farther, and pointed out Lucas Corsini standing at the door, sword in hand, and with guards at his back, under instructions to prevent his entrance, if he tried to force his way in.

Pietro was so amazed at this opposition, the first he had ever experienced, that he did not even try to make head against it. He returned home, and wrote to his brother-in-law, Paul Orsino, to come to him with his gendarmes. Unfortunately for him, the letter was intercepted. The seignorial body construed it as an attempt to incite revolution, and called upon the citizens

to rise. The latter hastily seized their arms, rushed from the houses, and assembled *en masse* upon the Square of the Palace. Meanwhile, Cardinal Giovanni dei Medici had taken horse, and, with the expectation of support from the Orsino, was riding through the streets of Florence, followed by his retainers, and shouting his war cry:

"Palle! Palle!"

But times were changed; the cry found no echo, and when the cardinal reached Via Delle Calzaioli, he was greeted with such threatening murmurs that he began to realize, that instead of trying to stir up a revolution in Florence, the best thing he could do would be to leave the city before the popular fury ran too high. He hurried back to his palace, expecting to find his brothers, Pietro and Giulio there; but they had made their escape by the San Gallo gate, under the protection of Orsino and his gendarmes. The danger was imminent, and Giovanni undertook to follow their example, but wherever he went the uproar which greeted him grew more and more threatening. At last, realizing that his peril increased with every moment, he alighted from his horse and entered a house, the door of which was standing open. This house, fortunately enough, communicated in the rear with a Franciscan convent: one of the brothers loaned the fugitive his frock, and under the protection of that lowly garb, the cardinal succeeded in leaving Florence, and joined his brothers in the Apennines.

On the same day the Medici were declared traitors and rebels, and ambassadors were sent to the King of France. They found him at Pisa, in the act of restoring her old-time independence to that city, which had been eighty-seven years under the Florentine yoke.

Charles made no other response to the ambassadori than to announce his purpose to march at once upon Florence.

The magnificent republic, as may well be imagined, was terrified beyond description by this declaration. She had no time to prepare for defence, nor strength to defend herself as she was. Every powerful family, however, assembled its retainers and vassals, and having placed arms in their hands, awaited events, with a fixed purpose not to begin hostilities, but to defend themselves if attacked by the French. It was agreed that if anything should make necessary a call to arms, the signal should be given by a peal of bells on all the churches. This resolution was likely to lead to more frightful results in Florence, perhaps, than in any other city. The palaces of that day which have endured to our own time are still veritable fortresses, and the everlasting combats of Guelphs and Ghibellines had familiarized the Tuscans with the methods of street warfare.

The King made his appearance at the San Friano gate on the seventeenth of November at evening; he found the whole body of the Florentine nobility assembled there, arrayed in their most superb garments, accompanied by the clergy singing hymns, and by masses of the people, to whom any change whatever was a change for the better, and who hoped to regain some semblance of liberty by the fall of the Medici. Charles VIII. stopped an instant under a sort of gilded canopy, which had been prepared for him, and answered by a few evasive words the grandiloquent phrases addressed to him by the seignorial body; then, having called for his lance, he rested it upon his thigh and gave the order to march into the city, which he traversed from end to end with his army, alighting finally at the Medici palace

which had been made ready to receive him. On the following day the negotiations began, but the respective parties were very far from being in accord. The Florentines had received Charles as a guest, whereas he had entered the city as a conqueror. And so when the deputies of the seignorial body suggested their willingness to ratify the treaty made by Pietro dei Medici, the King replied that that treaty was mere waste paper, as they had expelled its author; that Florence was his by conquest as he had demonstrated the night before by riding through her streets with lance in rest, and that he would reserve the question of sovereignty to be decided according to his good pleasure. He informed them further, that on the morrow he would give them his ultimatum in writing, and would let them know whether he would reinstate the Medici in power or delegate his authority to the seignorial body.

This response spread consternation broadcast in Florence, but the result was to strengthen the resolution of the Florentines to defend themselves.

Charles was exceedingly amazed at what he saw in his passage through the city of its overflowing population, for not only were the streets through which he rode almost impassable on account of the crowd, but the houses, from roof to cellar, seemed to be bursting with people. It is probable, indeed, that Florence contained at this time something like a hundred and fifty thousand souls.

On the following day the deputies called again upon the King at the appointed hour and were admitted to his presence, when the discussion began anew. At last, when it became evident that they could reach no understanding, the royal secretary, who was standing at the foot of the throne upon which Charles sat with his head

covered, unfolded a paper and began to read the terms proposed by the King of France. But before the reading was a third done, the discussion broke out again hotter than ever, and when Charles declared that those terms should be accepted or he would order his trumpets to sound, Pietro Capponi, the secretary of the republic, often called the Scipio of Florence, snatched the shameful capitulation from the hands of the King's secretary and tore it in pieces.

"Sound your trumpets, if you choose, Sire," he cried, "and we will sound our bells."

With that he threw the pieces in the face of the stupefied reader, and rushed from the chamber to give the terrible word which would turn Florence into a bloody battlefield.

Strange as it may appear, this audacious retort saved the city. The French believed that the Florentines must have some reliable resources of which they knew nothing, or they would not dare to talk so boldly, especially to a foe who had thus far encountered no obstacle whatsoever. The few discreet men who retained some influence over the King advised him to abate his pretentions and Charles eventually proposed more reasonable terms, which were accepted, signed by both parties and made public on the twenty-sixth of November, during mass at the Church of Santa Maria.

These were the terms:

The republic was to pay to Charles VIII. as subsidy the sum of a hundred and twenty thousand florins in three installments.

The decree of sequestration of the property of the Medici was to be rescinded, as well as that which put a price upon their heads.

The seignorial body were to agree to pardon the Pisans

for their offences, on condition that they renewed their allegiance to Florence.

Lastly, the republic was to recognize the claims of the Duke of Milan to Sarzane and Pietra Santa, and those claims were to be submitted to arbitration to decide their money value.

The King of France, on his side, agreed to restore the fortresses which had been placed in his hands when he should either have made himself master of the City of Naples or should have put an end to the war by a peace or a two years' truce, or when he should have taken his leave of Italy for any reason.

Two days after the publication of this accommodation Charles, to the vast delight of the seignorial body, quitted Florence and marched toward Rome by way of Poggibondi and Sienna.

The pope was beginning to share the universal alarm; he had learned of the massacres of Fivizzano, Lunigiane, and Immola; he knew that Pietro dei Medici had given up the fortress of Tuscany, that Florence had surrendered at discretion, and that Catherine Sforza had come to terms with the conqueror; he saw the scattered Neapolitan troops passing through Rome, demoralized and disheartened, on their way to the Abruzzi to reorganize; so that he found himself without protection against an enemy who was marching directly upon him, with all Romagna in his power from sea to sea, and with his forces extending in an unbroken line from Piombino to Ancona.

Just at this time Alexander received Bajazet's reply to his request for assistance; it had been so long delayed because the papal envoy and the Neapolitan ambassador were arrested by Giovanni della Rovère, brother of Cardinal Giulio, at the moment of landing at Sinigaglia. They

were the bearers of a verbal message to the effect that the Sultan, to his great regret, could not assist his Holiness with troops because he just then had his hands full with three wars, one with the Sultan of Egypt, another with the King of Hungary, and the third with the Greeks of Macedonia and Epirus. But they were accompanied by a favorite of the Sultan, who was entrusted with a private letter for Alexander, in which Bajazet offered, upon certain conditions, to furnish some pecuniary assistance. Although the messengers were arrested, as we have said, the Turk found a way to forward his despatch to the pope, and we transcribe it in all its artlessness.

"Sultan Bajazet, son of Sultan Mahomet II. by the grace of God Emperor of Asia and Europe, to the father and master of all Christians, Alexander, by Divine Providence Pope of Rome:

"After the congratulations which we owe to your Holiness, and which we offer with our whole heart, we take leave to inform your Holiness by the mouth of your envoy, Giorgio Bucciarda, that we have learned of your convalescence with exceeding delight and satisfaction. The said Bucciarda having informed us among other things that the King of France, who is marching against your Grandeur, has expressed a desire to have in his hands our brother, Djein, who is now in your power—a thing which would not only be against our wishes, but which would have very disastrous results for your Grandeur and for all Christendom—we have conceived, in consultation with your envoy, Giorgio, a most excellent scheme for your repose and honor, and for our personal satisfaction at the same time. It would be well that our brother, Djein, who, being a man, is mortal, and who is in your Grandeur's power, should depart this life at the

earliest possible moment, because his decease, which would be a blessing to him in his present position, would be very useful to your Eminence and very conducive to your repose, and, at the same time, very agreeable to me, who am your friend. If this suggestion be accepted by your Grandeur, as I trust it will be, owing to your wish to oblige us, it will be much better, both for your Grandeur's welfare and for our satisfaction, that the thing be done sooner, rather than later, and by the surest method which can be employed, and that the said Djein be made to pass from the sufferings of this world to a happier and more tranquil world, where his soul will find peace at last. If your Grandeur adopts this plan and sends to us the body of our brother, we, Sultan Bajazet, bind ourselves to deliver to your Grandeur, at such place, and into such hands as you may appoint, the sum of three hundred thousand ducats, wherewith you can purchase some fine domain for your children, and in order to facilitate such purchase, we will consent to place the three hundred thousand ducats in the hands of a third party, pending the fulfillment of these conditions, so that your Grandeur may be quite certain to receive them on the appointed day, in exchange for our brother's body. Furthermore, I engage my word to your Eminence, for your greater security, that so long as your Eminence sits upon the papal throne, no injury shall be inflicted by me or mine, by my retainers or my countrymen upon any Christian of any quality or condition whatsoever, upon land or sea; and for your Grandeur's greater satisfaction and sense of security, and to the end that no doubt may linger in your mind as to the ultimate fulfillment of what I promise, I have sworn and affirmed, in the presence of your envoy, Bucciarda, by the true God whom we adore, and by our Holy

Gospel, that it shall be fulfilled, point by point, from the first to the last. And now, to renew and make more complete your Grandeur's sense of security, and to remove every vestige of doubt from your heart, and strengthen and deepen your conviction of my sincerity, I, the said Sultan Bajazet, do hereby swear by the true God who made heaven and earth, and all things that are therein, I swear, I say, by the only God in whom we believe and whom we adore, that I will scrupulously and religiously hold to what I have said herein, and that I will neither do nor attempt anything in future to the prejudice of your Grandeur.

"Done in our palace at Constantinople, the twelfth of September of the year 1494 since the birth of Christ."

This letter caused the Holy Father unbounded satisfaction. A paltry four or five thousand Turks would be of little service in his then plight, and would be likely to compromise the cause of the supreme head of Christendom rather than assist it; whereas three hundred thousand ducats, that is to say, almost a million lire, was a very convenient thing to receive under any circumstances. To be sure, so long as Djein lived Alexander received an income of a hundred and eighty thousand lire, which represented a capital of nearly two millions; but when one is in need of money, one must make a sacrifice for cash. Notwithstanding, Alexander did not come at once to a determination, other than to act as circumstances might dictate.

But another matter, concerning which it was most essential that he should come to a speedy conclusion, was to the attitude he should adopt toward the King of France. He refused at first to believe in the possibility of the success of the French in Italy, and had staked all the chances of the future eminence of his family

upon his alliance with the House of Aragon. But now the House of Aragon was tottering to its fall, and a volcano, more formidable than Vesuvius threatened to destroy Naples. It was plain therefore that he must change his policy, and make his peace with the victorious King, which was by no means an easy thing to do, as Charles bore him bitter ill-will because he had refused to invest him with the Neapolitan crown, and had confirmed the title of the House of Aragon thereto.

Alexander sent Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini to the King of France to see what accommodation could be arrived at. The choice appeared ill-advised at first glance because the ambassador was the nephew of Pope Pius II., who had waged unremitting warfare with the House of Anjou; but Alexander, in acting thus, had a secret motive, which his advisers could not fathom. He guessed that Charles would not receive his envoy without some demur, and that in the discussions which his repugnance would necessarily lead to Piccolomini would be sure to come in contact with the men who governed the young King's actions. Now, over and above his ostensible mission for Charles VIII. Piccolomini had secret instructions to be communicated to his most influential advisers. They were Briçonnet and Philippe de Luxembourg, and Piccolomini was authorized to offer each of them a cardinal's hat.

As Alexander had anticipated, his envoy was refused an audience of the King, and was obliged to confer with his advisers. The result was that Piccolomini returned to Rome with the King's refusal to listen to him, but with the promise of Briçonnet and Luxembourg to use whatever influence they possessed in favor of the Holy Father, and to prepare the King's mind to receive a second embassy.

Meanwhile the French were approaching nearer and nearer, never halting for more than forty-eight hours in one place; so that the necessity of coming to some definite arrangement with Charles became more and more urgent. He entered Sienna and Viterbo without striking a blow; Yves d'Alègre and Louis de Ligny received Ostia from the hands of the Colonnas; Civita Vecchia and Corneto opened their gates; the Orsini made submission, and Giovanni Sforza, the pope's son-in-law, withdrew from the Aragonese alliance. Alexander decided therefore that the moment had arrived for him to abandon his ally, and sent to Charles the Bishops of Concordia and Terni, and Monsignore Gratian, his own confessor. They were instructed to renew the promise of the cardinalate to Briçonnet and Philippe de Luxembourg, and had full power to treat in their master's name, whether Charles chose to include Alphonso II. in the treaty, or refused to sign except with the pope alone. They found the King wavering between the innuendoes of Giulio della Rovère, who, as an eye-witness of the pope's simony, urged upon him that he ought to assemble a council, and procure the deposition of the unworthy head of the Church, and the secret support accorded the pope by the Bishops of Mans and Saint Malo. He finally decided to investigate matters for himself, and without coming to any decision beforehand he pursued his march, and sent the pope's ambassadors back to Rome, accompanied by the Maréchal de Gié, the Seneschal of Beaucaire, and Jean de Gannay, first president of the Parliament of Paris. They were instructed to say to Alexander:

1st. That the King's most earnest desire was to be allowed to enter Rome without resistance, and that if that were allowed, voluntarily and freely, he would

respect the authority of the Holy Father and the privileges of the Church.

2d. That the King wished that Djein should be placed in his hands to be used as a weapon against the Sultan, if the fancy should seize him to carry the war into Macedonia or Turkey or the Holy Land.

3d. That all other matters were of such trifling importance that they would easily be adjusted at the first conference.

The ambassadors added that the French army was within two days march of Rome, and that Charles would probably appear in person to receive the reply of his Holiness in the evening of the second day thereafter.

It was impossible to reckon much upon negotiations with a prince whose movements were so expeditious as that. Alexander notified Ferdinand that he must leave Rome at the earliest possible moment in the interest of his own safety, but Ferdinand refused to listen to the suggestion and declared that he would not go out at one gate until Charles actually entered at another. Even so, his further stay in Rome was not long. On the second day, about eleven in the morning, a look-out stationed on top of the Castle of San Angelo, whither the pope had withdrawn, cried out that the advance-guard of the enemy was in sight: immediately Alexander and the Duke of Calabria went up to the terrace at the top of the fortress, and made sure with their own eyes that the soldier had told the truth. Not till then did the Duke of Calabria take horse, and ride out of the Porta San Sebastiano at the very moment that the French vanguard halted five hundred paces from the Porta del Popolo. It was the thirty-first of December, 1494.

At three in the afternoon, the whole army having

come up, the advance-guard moved forward once more, with drums beating and colors flying.

"It consisted," says Paulus Jovius, an eye-witness (History, Book II, Page 41), "of Swiss and Germans, with tight-fitting short coats, of all colors of the rainbow. They were armed with short, sharp swords, like those of the ancient Romans, and carried ashen lances ten feet long with a narrow, pointed head; about a fourth part of them carried, instead of lances, halberds with heads made in the shape of an axe, and with a four-cornered point; these weapons were used to cut or thrust indifferently. The first rank of each battalion wore helmets and shields, which protected the head and breast, so that when they were fighting they presented to the enemy a triple line of steel, which rose and fell like the quills of a porcupine. To every thousand soldiers a company of a hundred fusileers was attached. The officers wore waving plumes upon their helmets to distinguish them from their soldiers."

After the Swiss infantry came the Gascon cross-bowmen; there were five thousand of them, and they wore a very simple uniform in striking contrast to the rich costume of the Swiss, the shortest of whom was at least a head taller than any one of them. They were excellent soldiers, however, agile and daring, and especially noted for the rapidity with which they stretched and fired their iron cross-bows.

Behind them came the cavalry, the pink of the French nobility, with gilded helmets and collars, and silk and velvet doublets; with swords, each of which had a name of its own, coronets, each of which represented a broad domain, and colors, each of which represented an affair of the heart. In addition to these talismans, each horseman carried in his hand, like the

Italian gendarmes, a lance with a grooved, solid point, and at his saddle-bow a war-club cut in ridges, or studded with nails. Their horses were large and strong; but their tails and ears were cut after the French fashion. Unlike the horses of the Italian gendarmes, they wore no waxed leather housings, and were consequently more exposed. Each horseman was followed by three horses, the first ridden by a page armed like his master, and the others by two squires, who were called lateral auxiliaries, because in battle they fought on the right and left of their leader. This troop was not only the most magnificently equipped, but the most numerous in the whole army, for as there were twenty-five hundred knights, the three retainers who attended each of them carried the total strength of the troop to ten thousand.

Five thousand light horse came next, carrying great wooden bows, from which they shot long arrows from a distance, like the English archers. They were of great assistance in a battle, for they were capable of very swift motion, and could dash in an instant from one wing to the other, and from rear-guard to van, wherever help was needed, and when their quivers were empty, gallop away again at such speed that neither infantry nor heavy cavalry could follow them. Their defensive armor consisted of a helmet and a half-shield; some of them also carried a short lance, designed to nail a foe to the ground when he was overthrown. They all wore long cloaks, adorned with shoulder-knots and silver stars, amid which shone the armorial bearings of their chiefs.

Last of all came the young King's escort; four hundred archers, including a hundred Scots, formed the hedge on either side, while two hundred of the most

illustrious knights marched on foot beside the prince carrying heavy war-clubs over their shoulders. In the centre of this superb body of men came Charles VIII., cased in magnificent armor as was his steed; at his right and left rode Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, brother of the Duke of Milan, and Cardinal Giulio della Rovere, whom we have mentioned so often; he was afterwards Pope Julius II. Cardinals Colonna and Savelli were directly behind them, and next came Fabricio and Prosper Colonna, together with all the Italian princes and generals, who had joined the triumphal march of the conqueror, and were freely intermingled with the great nobles of France.

The people assembled in vast crowds to watch the march of these unfamiliar, strangely attired soldiers from beyond the Alps, and were listening anxiously to a noise like the rumbling of thunder, which drew nearer and nearer. Soon the very earth seemed to tremble, the glass rattled in the windows, and then the cause of it all was explained by the sight of thirty-six bronze cannon, each drawn by six stout horses, which came rumbling along on their carriages behind the King's escort. The length of these cannon was eight feet, and as the opening was large enough for a man to put his head in, it was estimated that each of these awe-inspiring machines, which were quite unknown among the Italians, weighed nearly six thousand pounds.

Behind the cannon came culverins sixteen feet long, and falconnets, of which the smallest carried a ball as large as a grenade. This formidable artillery formed the rear-guard of the French army, and ended the procession. Six hours had elapsed since the first Swiss passed through the gate, when the great guns entered

the city; as the night had then fallen, and as only one out of every six artillerymen carried a torch, the effect was rather more depressing than when surrounding objects were lighted up by the sun.

The young King took up his quarters in the Palazzo di Venetia, all the artillery being bivouacked upon the square and in the neighboring streets. The rest of the army scattered here and there throughout the city.

During the evening the keys of Rome and of the gate of the Belvedere Garden were brought to the King, rather to do him honor, than to set his mind at ease concerning his personal safety. The same thing, by the way, was done for the Duke of Calabria.

The pope, as we have said, was at the Castle of San Angelo with no retinue but six cardinals; so that, on the very first day after his entrance into the city, the King had about him a much more strikingly brilliant court than that of the head of the Church.

Thereupon the subject of the propriety of convoking a council to try Alexander for simony, and strive for his deposition, was again discussed. But the King's principal advisers who were retained by the other side, as we have seen, called attention to the fact that it was a most inopportune moment to stir up a new schism in the Church when they were contemplating an expedition against the infidels. As the King was at heart of the same opinion, it was not very difficult to convince him, and it was decided to enter into negotiations with his Holiness.

The negotiations, however, were within an ace of being broken off before they were fairly begun; for the first thing Charles demanded was that the Castle of San Angelo should be turned over to him, whereas it was the last thing the pope was willing to accede to because the

castle seemed to him to be his only absolutely safe retreat. Twice did Charles, in his youthful impetuosity determine to lay hold by force of what was not given up to him voluntarily, and twice did he turn his guns upon the Holy Father's abiding place; but he was unmoved by these demonstrations, and this time the King, obstinate as he was, was the one to recede. That point was laid aside, and the following terms were agreed upon:

The relations between his Majesty, the King of France, and the Holy Father, were thenceforth to be such as should exist between sincere friends and staunch allies.

Pending the final conquest of the Kingdom of Naples the King of France was to occupy the fortresses of Civita Vecchia, Terracina, and Spoleto, for the comfort and convenience of his army.

Lastly, Cardinal Valentino (such was the name assumed by Cæsar Borgia, from his archbishopric of Valentia) was to accompany King Charles as apostolic legate, more accurately, as hostage.

When these terms were definitely settled, the ceremonial to be observed at the interview was decided upon. King Charles left the Palazzo di Venetia, and took up his abode at the Vatican. At an hour previously fixed, he entered the garden by one door opening into it from the palace, while the pope, who had not left the Castle of San Angelo, passed through the corridor which connected that fortress with the Vatican, and went down into the garden by another door. Almost immediately the King espied the pope and knelt where he stood; but the pope pretended not to see him, whereupon the King rose and walked several steps nearer to him, and knelt a second time; as there was a clump of trees between them at that moment, his Holiness had a new excuse for still

feigning ignorance of his presence, and the King was compelled to go through with the whole performance; he rose again, took several steps more, and knelt a third time directly in front of the Holy Father, who finally perceived him and hurried up to him as if to prevent his kneeling. He took off his baretta, raised the King from the ground, embraced him and kissed him affectionately on the forehead and declined to cover his head again until the King had put on his cap, which he assisted him with his own hands to do. After they had stood together for a short time and had exchanged a few words of courteous and friendly salutation, the King straightway begged his Holiness to add to the Sacred College the name of Giullaume Briçonnet, Bishop of Saint-Malo. As this was all agreed upon beforehand between the pope and the bishop, although the King knew nothing of it, Alexander seized the opportunity of granting what was asked him without hesitation, and instantly despatched a servant to his son, Cardinal Valentino, in quest of a cloak and hat. He then took the King of France by the hand and escorted him to the so-called Hall of the Parrot, where the ceremony of installing the new cardinal was to take place. The solemn ceremony of the oath of allegiance to his Holiness, as the supreme head of the Christian Church, which was to be taken by Charles, was postponed for two days.

When the appointed day arrived, the pontiff had assembled about him every Roman of note in the nobility, the clergy, or the army. Charles, too, came to the solemn function with a gorgeous retinue of princes, prelates, and captains. At the door of the palace he was met by four cardinals, two of whom took their places at his sides, and the other two behind him, and with his whole suite following on, they walked through

a long succession of apartments full of guards and retainers, to the audience hall, where the pope was seated on his throne with his son, Cæsar Borgia, standing behind him.

As soon as he stepped within the door, the King of France began to go through with the customary ceremonial and, having duly bent his knee and kissed the feet, hands, and forehead of his Holiness, he stood erect while the first president of the Parliament of Paris, stepping forward, said in a loud voice:

"Most Holy Father:

"Behold my King, ready to take the oath of allegiance which he owes to you; but it is usual in France that he who offers his services to his lord should receive in exchange such favors as he seeks. Consequently, his Majesty, while undertaking for his part to deal with your Holiness much more munificently than he asks your Holiness to deal with him, ventures to entreat your Holiness to grant him three favors. In the first place, the confirmation of the privileges heretofore accorded to the King himself, the Queen, and their son, the Dauphin; secondly, the investiture of the Kingdom of Naples for himself and his successors; and lastly, the delivery to him of the person of Sultan Djein, brother of the Emperor of the Turks."

The pope was struck dumb for a moment by this speech, for he did not anticipate these three demands, which Charles put forward thus publicly for no other reason than to make it impossible for him to refuse them. But he recovered his self-possession very soon, and replied that he would gladly confirm all the privileges accorded to the House of France by his predecessors, so that the King might look upon his first request as granted; that the matter of the investiture was one to

be discussed in the Council of Cardinals, but that he would do his utmost to bring about a result in accordance with his wishes; lastly, as to the Sultan's brother, that he would postpone the subject to be discussed in the Sacred College at a more convenient season, but he declared that it should not be his fault if the King were not satisfied upon that point as well, since it was clearly for the good of all Christendom that Djein should be turned over to him, the purpose being to render the success of a crusade more certain.

After listening to this response Charles bowed his head, signifying that he was content; he remained standing with uncovered head, in front of the pope, while the first president began again, as follows:

"Most Holy Father:

"It is an ancient custom of Christian kings, particularly of the most Christian kings of France, to declare through their ambassadors their deep respect for the Holy See, and for the pontiffs whom Divine Providence raises to that eminence. But his present Most Christian Majesty, desiring to visit the tomb of the Holy Apostles, determined to perform this obligation, which he regards as a most sacred one, not by the mouth of an ambassador, or by any other delegated authority, but in his own person; and so, Most Holy Father, his Majesty, the King of France, recognizes in you the one true vicar of Christ on earth, the legitimate successor of the apostles, Saint Peter and Saint Paul, and promises and swears to maintain the filial faith and respect which the kings, his predecessors, have been wont to promise and swear to you; and he does hereby devote himself and all his power to your Holiness' service and the interests of the Holy See."

The pope rose to his feet with a great joy at his heart,

for the taking of the oath of allegiance with such publicity banished all fears of a council. Thenceforth he was disposed to grant whatever the King of France chose to ask; he took him by the left hand and made a short but exceedingly friendly response, calling him the eldest son of the Church. The ceremony at an end, they left the audience hall together, the pope still holding the King's hand, and walked thus to the apartment where the consecrated vestments were laid aside. The pope made a pretence of proposing to escort the King to his own apartments, but the King would not hear of it, so they saluted once more and separated.

The King remained a week longer at the Vatican, then returned to the Palazzo di Venetia. During that week everything that Charles had asked was discussed and finally arranged to his satisfaction. The Bishop of Mans was made cardinal; the investiture of the Kingdom of Naples was promised to Charles, and it was agreed that when he left Rome the pope, in exchange for a hundred and twenty thousand lire, should place in his hands the brother of the Emperor of Constantinople. Alexander wished to be hospitable to the last, and invited Djein to dinner on the same day on which he and his new patron were to say farewell to Rome.

When the time fixed for his departure arrived, the King mounted his horse, clad in full armor, and rode to the Vatican, attended by a large and brilliant suite. He alighted in front of the great door, and entered the palace with some three or four noblemen only, leaving his escort on the Square of St. Peter's. He found his Holiness awaiting him with Cardinal Valentino at his right and, at his left, Djein, who, as we said, had dined at his table. Thirteen cardinals were standing around the pope. The King, with his knee on the

ground, asked the Holy Father for his blessing, and bent over to kiss his feet, but Alexander would not permit it; he took him in his arms and kissed him with a show of paternal affection, but with hatred at his heart. The pope then presented to the King the son of Mahomet II., a handsome young man of noble bearing, clad in a superb oriental costume, the ample folds of which were in striking contrast with the scant and severely simple garments worn by the Christians.

Djein stepped forward to meet the King, without humility, and equally without arrogance, as an emperor's son should greet a King, and kissed first his hand, then his shoulder. Then he turned to the pope, and said to him in Italian, which he spoke extremely well, that he begged him to commend him to the great king, who deigned to take him under his protection; he assured the pope that he would never have occasion to repent having restored his freedom, and said to Charles that he hoped he would have reason to be content with him, if, after taking Naples, he crossed over into Greece according to his present purpose.

His words were uttered with such a dignified air, and at the same time, with such simplicity that the King of France extended his hand to the young man with a frank, impulsive movement, as to a worthy comrade-in-arms.

The transfer having thus been accomplished, Charles took leave of the pope for the last time and went down into the square, where he waited for Cardinal Valentino, who, as we have said, was to accompany him as a hostage, and had remained behind to exchange a few words with his father. An instant later Cæsar Borgia appeared, mounted upon a superbly caparisoned mule, and followed by servants leading six magnificent horses,

presented to the King of France by the Holy Father. Charles immediately mounted one of them to express his appreciation of the pope's gift, and left Rome at the head of his army for Marino, where he arrived the same evening.

There he learned tl at Alphonso, belying his reputation as an adroit politician and great general, had embarked with all his treasure upon a squadron of four galleys, leaving the direction of the war and the government of the kingdom to his son Ferdinand. Thus everything contributed to facilitate Charles' triumphal march; city gates flew open at his approach; his enemies fled without awaiting his coming, and he had acquired the name of "The Conqueror," before he had fought a single battle.

The next morning at daybreak the army resumed its march, and halted at Velletri in the evening, after a long day's journey. The King, who had been in the saddle since morning, left Cardinal Valentino at the quarters prepared for him, and went on to his own, accompanied by Djein.

Cæsar Borgia had twenty heavily laden vans among the *impedimenta* of the army; he caused one of them to be opened, and a magnificent service of plate to be taken therefrom, and ordered supper to be prepared, as he had done the evening before. Meanwhile night had fallen; he shut himself up in an out-of-the-way room, and exchanged his cardinal's garb for the dress of a groom. In that disguise he left the house set apart for his accommodation, without being recognized, and made his way into the open country. About half a league outside the town, a servant was awaiting him with two fleet horses. Cæsar, who was an accomplished horseman, leaped into the saddle, and he and his companion set off at full

speed for Rome, which they reached at daybreak. Cæsar alighted at the abode of Signor Flores, Auditor of the Rote, where a fresh horse and suitable clothes were brought him; he then betook himself at once to his mother's house. She cried aloud for joy when she saw him, for the cardinal had maintained a mysterious silence to her, as to everybody else, concerning his plan of returning at once.

This demonstration of delight on the part of the Vanozza was prompted less by maternal love than by her thirst for vengeance. One evening while Charles VIII. and Alexander VI. were swearing an eternal friendship which neither really felt in his heart, and exchanging pledges which were broken in advance, a messenger arrived from the Vanozza, with a letter for Cæsar, wherein she begged him to come without delay to her house on Via della Longara. Cæsar questioned the messenger, but could get no other reply than that he would learn all that he wished to know from his mother's own lips. As soon as he was at liberty, he donned a layman's coat and, wrapping himself in an ample cloak, left the Vatican and made the best of his way to the Church of Reginà-Coeli, which, as our readers will remember, was in close proximity to the residence of the pope's mistress.

As he approached the spot, Cæsar began to notice extraordinary indications of havoc and devastation. The street was strewn with débris of furniture and rags of priceless stuffs. When he reached the foot of the short flight of steps leading to the front door, he saw that the windows were shattered and the curtains in tatters waving about in the wind. At a loss to understand what it all meant, he rushed inside and hurried through several deserted and demoralized apartments.

At last he spied a light in one room, and found his mother there, sitting on the shattered remains of an ebony chest incrusted with silver and ivory. When Cæsar appeared she rose to her feet with pale cheeks and disheveled hair and, waving her hand over the scene of desolation, she cried:

"Behold the handiwork of your new friends, Cæsar!"

"What is the matter, mother? what is the meaning of this disorder?" the cardinal asked.

"The matter is," Vanozza replied, grinding her teeth with rage, "that the serpent you warmed has turned and bitten me, fearing, doubtless, to break his teeth upon you."

"Who did it?" cried Cæsar; "tell me, mother, and by the heaven above, I swear that I will do as much to him and more!"

"Who did it?" retorted Vanozza, "who but King Charles VIII., by the hands of his faithful allies, the Swiss? They knew that Melchiori was from home, and that I was living here alone with a few wretched menials, and so they came, breaking in the doors as if they had taken Rome by assault, and while Cardinal Valentino was entertaining their master, they were pillaging his mother's house, loading her with such insults and abuse as the Turks or Saracens themselves could not surpass."

"Enough, enough, mother," said Cæsar; "never fear, blood shall wash out the stain. Consider that what we have lost is as nothing compared to what we might lose, and my father and I will give back to you more than has been taken from you."

"It is not promises that I demand," cried Vanozza, "but vengeance."

"And vengeance you shall have, mother, or I will cease to call myself your son."

Having comforted his mother with this assurance, he took her to Lucrezia's palace, whose marriage to the Lord of Pesaro left her no less free than before, and returned to the Vatican, giving orders that his mother's house should be refitted on a more magnificent scale than before. These orders were punctually carried out, and Cæsar now found his mother once more amid luxurious surroundings, but with bitter hatred at her heart.

Hence the joyful cry with which she welcomed his appearance.

The mother and son exchanged but a few words; Cæsar then remounted his horse and rode to the Vatican, which he had left as a hostage but two days before. Alexander, who knew beforehand of his contemplated flight, and who not only approved it, but, in his capacity of sovereign pontiff, absolved his son in advance for the perjury he was about to commit, welcomed him joyfully, but advised him to go into hiding, as Charles VIII., in all human probability, would not be slow to reclaim his hostage.

The absence of Cardinal Valentino at the King's bedside reception the morning after their arrival at Velletri was remarked, and as Charles felt somewhat disturbed at his failure to appear, he sent to learn why it was. When the messenger reached the lodgings which Cæsar left the night before, he was told that he went out about nine o'clock in the evening, and had not since been seen. He returned with this intelligence to the King, who at once suspected that he had taken flight, and in the first outburst of his indignation communicated his perfidy to the whole army. The soldiers thereupon remembered the twenty vans which were so heavily laden, from one of which the cardinal had taken the magnificent service of plate, and, having no doubt that the others contained as

precious freight, they fell upon them, and broke them in pieces; but they found nothing within but stones and sand. This satisfied the King that the flight was arranged long before, and redoubled his wrath against the pope. Without loss of time he despatched to Rome Philippe de Bresse, afterwards Duke of Savoy, with orders to express to the Holy Father his displeasure at being dealt with so perfidiously.

But the pope replied that he knew absolutely nothing about his son's flight, and expressed his very deep regret thereat to his Majesty, saying that he had no idea where he could be, but that he certainly was not at Rome. It happened that the pope spoke the truth then, for Cæsar had withdrawn with Cardinal Orsino to one of his estates, and was in hiding there for the moment. The reply was conveyed to Charles by two messengers from the pope, the Bishops of Nepi and Sutri. The people too sent an ambassador to the King in the person of Monsignore Porcari, Dean of the Rote, who was instructed to express the keen displeasure of the Romans when they learned of the cardinal's breach of parole. Little as Charles was inclined to be content with empty words he was obliged to turn his attention to more important matters, and he continued his march to Naples without further delay, entering the city on the twenty-second of February, 1495.

Four days later the hapless Djein, who had fallen sick at Capua, died at Castel Nuovo. At the farewell dinner which he gave him, Alexander VI. experimented upon him with the poison of which he was to make such frequent use upon the cardinals in the future, and of which he was destined finally, in just retribution, to experience the effects himself. Thus we see how cleverly the pope had arranged to kill two birds with one stone:

In his twofold speculation on the unfortunate youth he sold his life to Charles VIII. for a hundred and twenty thousand lire, and his death to Bajazet II. for three hundred thousand ducats.

As it happened, however, there was some difficulty about this second payment; for the Emperor of the Turks, as the reader will remember, was not to pay the price of his brother's blood until the body was delivered to him, and the body, by order of Charles, was interred at Gaëta.

When Cæsar Borgia learned what had happened, he judged, reasonably enough, that the King had too many things to think about, in connection with his installation in his new capital, to worry about him; so he reappeared at Rome, and as his mother did not cease to urge him to keep his word to her, he signalized his return by an act of vengeance.

He had in his pay a Spaniard whom he had raised to the proud eminence of chief of his bravoes. He was a man of some thirty-five to forty years, whose whole life had been one long rebellion against all the laws of society, and he hesitated at nothing, provided that he was paid fair value for his services. This Don Michel Correglia, who acquired sanguinary celebrity under the name of Michelotto, was just the man for Cæsar's present purpose; for his devotion to Cæsar was no less absolute than Cæsar's confidence in him. The cardinal entrusted one portion of his vengeance to him, and reserved the other portion for himself.

Don Michel received orders to scour the Roman Campagna, and murder every Frenchman he fell in with. He at once set to work, and in the course of very few days achieved most satisfactory results. More than a hundred persons were robbed and murdered, among

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precious freight, they fell upon them, and broke them in pieces; but they found nothing within but stones and sand. This satisfied the King that the flight was arranged long before, and redoubled his wrath against the pope. Without loss of time he despatched to Rome Philippe de Bresse, afterwards Duke of Savoy, with orders to express to the Holy Father his displeasure at being dealt with so perfidiously.

But the pope replied that he knew absolutely nothing about his son's flight, and expressed his very deep regret thereat to his Majesty, saying that he had no idea where he could be, but that he certainly was not at Rome. It happened that the pope spoke the truth then, for Cæsar had withdrawn with Cardinal Orsino to one of his estates, and was in hiding there for the moment. The reply was conveyed to Charles by two messengers from the pope, the Bishops of Nepi and Sutri. The people too sent an ambassador to the King in the person of Monsignore Porcari, Dean of the Rote, who was instructed to express the keen displeasure of the Romans when they learned of the cardinal's breach of parole. Little as Charles was inclined to be content with empty words he was obliged to turn his attention to more important matters, and he continued his march to Naples without further delay, entering the city on the twenty-second of February, 1495.

Four days later the hapless Djein, who had fallen sick at Capua, died at Castel Nuovo. At the farewell dinner which he gave him, Alexander VI. experimented upon him with the poison of which he was to make such frequent use upon the cardinals in the future, and of which he was destined finally, in just retribution, to experience the effects himself. Thus we see how cleverly the pope had arranged to kill two birds with one stone:

in his twofold speculation on the unfortunate youth he sold his life to Charles VIII. for a hundred and twenty thousand lire, and his death to Bajazet II. for three hundred thousand ducats.

As it happened, however, there was some difficulty about this second payment; for the Emperor of the Turks, as the reader will remember, was not to pay the price of his brother's blood until the body was delivered to him, and the body, by order of Charles, was interred at Gaëta.

When Cæsar Borgia learned what had happened, he judged, reasonably enough, that the King had too many things to think about, in connection with his installation in his new capital, to worry about him; so he reappeared at Rome, and as his mother did not cease to urge him to keep his word to her, he signalized his return by an act of vengeance.

He had in his pay a Spaniard whom he had raised to the proud eminence of chief of his bravoes. He was a man of some thirty-five to forty years, whose whole life had been one long rebellion against all the laws of society, and he hesitated at nothing, provided that he was paid fair value for his services. This Don Michel Correglia, who acquired sanguinary celebrity under the name of Michelotto, was just the man for Cæsar's present purpose; for his devotion to Cæsar was no less absolute than Cæsar's confidence in him. The cardinal entrusted one portion of his vengeance to him, and reserved the other portion for himself.

Don Michel received orders to scour the Roman Campagna, and murder every Frenchman he fell in with. He at once set to work, and in the course of very few days achieved most satisfactory results. More than a hundred persons were robbed and murdered, among

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them the son of the Bishop of Saint Malo, who was returning to France, and upon whom Michelotto found the sum of three thousand crowns.

Cæsar marked out the Swiss for his own prey, for they it was who had laid waste Vanozza's dwelling. The pope had in his service about a hundred and fifty soldiers of that nation, who had brought their families to Rome, and were growing rich upon their pay, eked out by some other employment. The cardinal dismissed them all, with orders to leave Rome within twenty-four hours, and Roman territory within three days. The poor devils were all assembled upon the Square of St. Peter's with their wives and children, and their baggage, for the purpose of obeying the order, when suddenly they were surrounded on all sides by two thousand Spaniards who began to fire upon them with arquebuses, and to cut them down with their swords, while Cæsar and his mother watched the carnage from a window. Some fifty or sixty were slain in this way, but the others stood their ground against the cut-throats, and retreated in good order to a house which they barricaded; and there they defended themselves so gallantly that the pope, who did not know the author of the butchery, had time to send the captain of his guards with a strong detachment, who succeeded in getting them out of the city to the number of some forty or more; the rest were massacred on the square, or killed in the house.

But this exploit was but a small part of the real vengeance for which Cæsar and his mother thirsted, for it did not reach Charles VIII., who was the real, and the only author of all the tribulation which the pope and his family had been subjected to for a year past. And so Cæsar soon abandoned such paltry methods to turn his attention to matters of greater moment, and devoted all

his wits to renewing the league of the Italian princes, which was disrupted by the defection of Sforza, the exile of Pietro, and the overthrow of Alphonso.

This undertaking was accomplished with greater ease than the pope anticipated. The Venetians were by no means free from concern at the neighborhood of the French King, and they trembled with apprehension that, when he had once made himself master of Naples, it might occur to him to conquer the rest of Italy. Ludovico Sforza, too, was beginning to fear, in view of the celerity with which Charles had overthrown the House of Aragon, that he would soon make no distinction between his allies and his enemies. Outside of Italy, Maximilian was only waiting for a pretext to put an end to the temporary peace, to which he had consented on account of the concessions made to him. Lastly, Ferdinand and Isabella were allies of the dethroned family.

Thus they were all equally apprehensive, though from diverse motives, and it took them but a short time to agree upon the necessity of driving Charles VIII. out of Italy altogether, and not merely out of Naples; and they bound themselves to use all means in their power, whether by way of negotiation, surprise, or actual force, to bring about his expulsion. The Florentines alone refused to take part in this waving of shields, and remained faithful to their plighted word.

According to the terms agreed upon by the confederates, the league was to last twenty-five years, and its ostensible purpose was to protect the supremacy of the pope, and the interests of Christianity; indeed, the preliminaries might easily have been mistaken for those of a crusade against the Turks, had not Bajazet's ambassador been present at almost all of the deliberations,

although a sense of shame prevented the Christian princes from making the Emperor of Constantinople in name a party to the league.

The confederates agreed to put on the field an army of thirty-four thousand horse and twenty thousand foot, and each one was required to furnish his contingent—the pope, four thousand horse; Maximilian, six thousand; the King of Spain, the Duke of Milan and the Republic of Venice, each eight thousand. In addition to these, each confederate was to raise and equip within six weeks of the execution of the treaty four thousand foot soldiers. Ships were to be provided by the maritime powers, but the expense of their equipment and maintenance was to fall equally upon all.

This league was made public on Palm Sunday, April 12, 1495, throughout Italy, and was received with intense satisfaction, particularly at Rome. Almost immediately after the promulgation of the articles intended for the public eye, the confederates began to carry out the secret articles. These secret articles bound Ferdinand and Isabella to send to Ischia, whither Alphonso's son had fled, a fleet of sixty galleys, with six hundred cavalry and five thousand infantry to assist in putting him back upon the throne. These troops were to be commanded by Gonzalvo of Cordova, who had acquired, by the taking of Grenada, the reputation of being the greatest general in Europe. On their side, the Venetians, with a fleet of forty galleys under Antonio Grimani, were to attack all the posts held by the French on the coasts of Calabria and Naples. The Duke of Milan's part was to consist in blocking all reinforcements from France and driving the Duc d'Orléans out of Asti. Maximilian undertook to harry the frontiers of France, and Bajazet to assist with money, ships, and troops, either the

Venetians or the Spaniards, according as he was appealed to by Barberigo or by Ferdinand the Catholic.

This league was the greater source of anxiety to Charles VIII. because the enthusiasm which greeted his advent had so suddenly died away. That had happened in his case which ordinarily happens to men who have more good luck than genius; instead of building up for himself among the great Neapolitan and Calabrian feudatories a party whose roots would be firmly imbedded in the soil, by confirming their privileges and increasing their influence, he wounded them by bestowing all the titles, all the offices and all the fiefs upon those who came with him from France; so that all the lucrative and dignified posts in the kingdom were filled by foreigners.

The result was that at the very moment the league was made public, Tropea and Amantea, which Charles had given to the Seigneur de Précy, rose in revolt, and hoisted the banner of Aragon; that the Spanish fleet had but to show itself before Reggio, in Calabria, when that town, which was more discontented under the new régime than the old, opened its gates to him instanter; and that Don Frederic, Alphonso's brother and Ferdinand's uncle, who had never left Brindisi, had but to appear at the gates of Tarento to be greeted as a liberator.

Charles VIII. heard of all these things at Naples, at a time when he had already grown weary of the work of organization necessitated by his latest conquest—a work for which he was entirely unfitted—and was turning his eyes longingly toward France, where the triumphal reception of a conquering hero awaited him. He yielded at once, therefore, to the first adviser who suggested the advisability of retracing his steps to his

own realm, which was threatened, as we have seen, by the Germans in the north, and by the Spaniards in the south.

He appointed Gilbert de Montpensier of the House of Bourbon, viceroy; D'Aubigny of the Scottish House of Stuart, his lieutenant in Calabria; Étienne de Vêse, commandant of Gaêta; and Don Julien, Gabriel de Montfaucon, Giullaume de Villeneuve, Georges de Silly, the Bailly de Vitry, and Graziano Guerra, governors of San-Angelo, Maufredonia, Trani, Catanzaro, Aquila, and Sulmone respectively. He left with his representative half of the Swiss, part of the Gascons, eight hundred French lances, and about five hundred Italian men-at-arms, the latter under the command of the Prefect of Rome, Prosper and Fabricio Colonna, and Antonio Savelli; and on the twentieth of May, at two o'clock in the afternoon, he marched out of Naples for his northward journey through the whole Italian peninsula, with the rest of his army, which consisted of eight hundred French lances, two hundred gentlemen of his guard, one hundred Italian men-at-arms, and three thousand Swiss, one thousand French and one thousand Gascon infantry. He counted upon being joined in Tuscany by Camillo Vitelli and his brothers with two hundred and fifty men-at-arms.

A week prior to his departure from Naples, Charles had sent Monseigneur de Saint-Paul, brother of the Cardinal of Luxumbourg, to Rome and, at the moment of setting out, he despatched the Archbishop of Lyons. Each of them was instructed to assure Alexander that the King most sincerely wished and was firmly determined to remain his friend. It was the fact that Charles desired nothing so much as to detach the pope from the league, with a view of securing in him a spiritual and

temporal champion. But a restless, ambitious, daring young king was not the sort of neighbor that suited Alexander; so he refused to listen to either of the envoys, and as the troops he had asked the doge and Ludovico Sforza to send him were not arrived in sufficient numbers to defend Rome, he contented himself with provisioning the Castle of San-Angelo for a siege, threw a strong garrison into it and withdrew with Cæsar to Orvieto, leaving the Cardinal of Saint Anastasius to receive the King.

Charles remained but three days at Rome, so great was his chagrin because Alexander, notwithstanding his prayers, had refused to await his coming. During those three days, instead of hearkening to the advice of Giulio della Rovere, who urged him anew to assemble a council and depose the pope, he turned over to the Romagnese officers, hoping thereby to win back the pope's good-will, the citadels of Terracena and Civita-Vecchia, retaining only that of Ostia, which he had promised to restore to Giulio.

At the end of the three days he left Rome and led his forces in three divisions toward Tuscany, across the States of the Church and, on the thirteenth, reached Sienna, where he was met by Philippe de Commines, whom he had previously sent on a mission to the Republic of Venice. He informed him that his enemies had forty thousand men under arms and were ready to fight him. This news had no other effect than to raise the King's spirits and those of the gentlemen of his army beyond all measure, for their easy conquest had inspired them with such disdain for their foes that they did not believe that any army, however numerous it might be, would dare to dispute their passage.

Charles was forced, however, to be convinced to the

contrary, when he learned at San-Teranzo, that his advance-guard, consisting of six hundred lances and fifteen hundred Swiss, under Maréchal de Gié, upon reaching Fornovo, were confronted by the troops of the allies, intrenched at Guiarola. The marshal at once halted upon a slight eminence, and so disposed his forces as to make the most of his position. He then sent a trumpet to the enemy's camp, to make demand upon Francesco di Gonzaga, generalissimo of the confederate troops, for free passage for the army of his King, and supplies at a reasonable price; and he also despatched a courier to Charles VIII. urging him to move forward quickly with his main body, as well as the rear-guard and artillery.

The confederates returned an evasive answer, for they were hesitating whether they ought to avoid the possibility of compromising all the forces at their disposal in a single battle, or to risk everything to gain everything, and try to annihilate the King of France and his army, thus burying the conqueror in the ruins of his conquest.

Charles VIII. was found overseeing the passage of the last of the cannon over the summit of Pontremoli Mountain; it was by no means an easy operation for, there being no marked path, they were obliged to haul them up and down by hand, which required as many as two hundred men for a single gun. When all the artillery was safely on the other side of the Apennines, Charles set off in hot haste for Fornovo, and arrived there the following morning.

From the top of the mountain, on the lower slopes of which Maréchal de Gié was encamped, the King espied his camp as well as that of the enemy. Both lay on the right bank of the Taro, at either end of the half circle formed by a chain of hills in the shape of an amphitheatre. The interval between the two camps, a vast

basin covered in times of freshet by the torrent which bounded it, was now nothing but a gravelly plain, upon which it was equally difficult for cavalry and infantry to manœuvre. There was also a thin line of woods, which followed the western slope of the hills, from one camp to the other, and was occupied by the Stradiotes, who, from its cover, had done some skirmishing with the French troops during the two days they had lain in camp waiting for the King.

The situation was not reassuring. The view from the top of the mountain overlooking Fornovo embraced both camps, as we have said, and it was easy to estimate the difference in numbers of the opposing forces. The French army was so reduced by the numerous garrisons they were obliged to leave in towns and fortresses he had kept possession of in Italy, that it numbered barely eight thousand combatants, while the Milanese-Venetian army amounted to more than thirty-five thousand.

Charles resolved therefore to make another trial of conciliatory measures, and sent Commines, who, as our readers will remember, joined him in Tuscany, to the Venetian officers, whose acquaintance he had made during his mission to the republic, and over whom he had acquired great influence, because of their justly high regard for his worth. He was instructed to say to the commanding officers of the enemy's forces, that his master desired nothing more than to continue his march without giving or receiving any offence; that he asked to be allowed to pass unhindered across the fair plains of Lombardy, which lay spread out before him farther than the eye could reach, with the snow-clad Alps towering above.

Commines found the army of the confederates divided in their councils; the Milanese and Venetians were anxious to let the King pass without attacking him, only too

well pleased, as they said, to have him leave Italy without doing any more harm than he had done; but the ambassadors of Spain and Germany were of a different opinion. As their masters had no troops in the army, and whatever expense they were to defray was already incurred, a battle could not fail to be advantageous to them; for if it were won they would reap all the fruits of victory, and, if lost, they would suffer none of the disastrous results of defeat. This divergence of opinion caused them to postpone their reply to Commines until the following day; and they agreed to send a plenipotentiary then to confer with him at a point midway between the two armies.

The King passed the night in great anxiety; the skies had threatened rain throughout the day, and the Taro overflowed its banks on such slight provocation, that though it was fordable then, it might become an impassable obstacle on the morrow; and perhaps the delay was intended for no other purpose than to make the position of the French army worse than it was. As it turned out, it was hardly dark when a terrible storm broke over their heads, and the thunder roared among the Apennines, and the heavens were ablaze with lightning all night long. At daybreak it seemed to abate a little; but the Taro, which was nothing but a brook the night before, had become a roaring torrent and was rapidly rising to the top of its banks.

At six in the morning, the King, fully armed and mounted, summoned Commines, and ordered him to repair to the rendezvous appointed by the Venetian officers. But the words were barely out of his mouth when a great uproar arose at the extreme right of the French army. The Stradiotes, creeping along under cover of the woods, had surprised one of the outposts, and after

putting every man to the sword were riding off, each man with a head at his saddle-bow, as their custom was. A detachment of cavalry started in pursuit, but, like wild beasts, they disappeared in the woods which were their lurking-place.

This unexpected attack, which was concocted, doubtless, by the German and Spanish ambassadors, produced upon the whole line the effect of a spark upon a train of powder. Commines on the one hand, and the Venetians officers on the other, tried in vain to stem the tide; light-armed troops, hot for the conflict, and listening to nothing but the reckless incitement of personal bravery, a characteristic failing of the time, had come to close quarters, and were rushing down into the plain as if it were a gladiatorial arena, each one burning to distinguish himself by doughty deeds. For a single instant the young King, carried away by their example, was on the point of forgetting his responsibility as commander-in-chief to act the part of a common soldier; but the Maréchal de Gié, Messire Claude de La Châtre, and MM. de Guise and de Trémouille, succeeded in checking his first impulse, and in inducing him to adopt the wiser course, which was to cross the Taro, without seeking a battle, but without avoiding it, either, if the enemy tried to prevent our crossing. Thereupon, the King, having listened to the opinions of his wisest and most gallant captains, disposed his forces thus:

The first line comprised the vanguard of three hundred and fifty of the flower of the whole army, commanded by the Maréchal de Gié and Jacques Trivulce; and a body of three thousand Swiss under Engelbert de Clèves, and De Lornay, the Queen's first equerry, whose mission it was to support the van. Then came three hundred archers of the guard, whom the King had

ordered to march on foot that they might support the cavalry by fighting in the spaces between their horses.

The second line, led by the King in person, formed the main body of the army, and comprised the artillery under Jean de Lagrange, one hundred gentlemen of the guard, whose banner was borne by Gilles Carronel, pensioners of the King's household, commanded by Aymar de Prie, the Scots, two hundred mounted cross-bow-men, and the rest of the French archers, led by M. de Crussol.

The third line, or rear-guard, preceded by the *impedimenta* upon six thousand beasts of burden, numbered but three hundred men-at-arms, commanded by MM. de Guise and de Trémouille; it was the weakest part of the army.

When all was in readiness Charles ordered the vanguard to cross the river, which it proceeded to do at once, opposite the little town of Fornovo, the horsemen being in water to their calves, and the foot soldiers holding to the horses' tails. When the last man of the first division had reached the other bank, he put his own division in motion to cross by the same ford, giving orders to MM. de Guise and de Trémouille, to time their crossing by that of the main body, as he had timed his by that of the vanguard.

His orders were punctually followed, and about ten in the morning the whole French army stood on the left bank of the Taro; as the tactics pursued by the enemy at this time made an immediate engagement imminent, the baggage-train, under the escort of Captain Odet de Riberac, drew away from the rear-guard, and took up a position on the extreme left.

Francesco di Gonzaga, commander-in-chief of the allied troops, had made his dispositions to correspond with those of the King of France; by his orders, the

Count of Cajazzo, with four hundred men-at-arms and two thousand infantry, crossed the Taro opposite the camp of the Venetians to confront the French vanguard, while he himself ascended the right bank to Fornovo and crossed the river by the same ford which the French army had taken, in order to fall upon its rear. Lastly, he stationed the Stradiotes half way between the two fords, with orders to cross in their turn and attack the French in flank, as soon as they saw that their van and rear were engaged. In addition to these offensive measures, Gonzaga had taken care to make provision for covering a possible retreat by leaving three reserve corps on the other bank, one commanded by the Venetian *proveditori* to guard the camp, and two others under Antonio di Montefeltro and Annibal Bentivoglio, drawn up in such manner as to support each other.

Charles VIII. took careful note of all these dispositions, and recognized in them the traces of that skill in the art of strategic warfare which made the Italian generals the greatest tacticians in the whole world. As there was no way of avoiding the danger, however, he determined to meet it with a bold face, and gave orders that the march of the army should not be interrupted. They soon found themselves hemmed in between the Count of Cajazzo, who blocked their path with his four hundred men-at-arms and two thousand infantry, and Gonzaga, who was close upon the heels of the rear-guard with six hundred men-at-arms, the flower of his army, a squad of Stradiotes, and more than five thousand infantry; his division alone was more numerous than the whole French army.

When MM. de Guise and de Trémouille found themselves so closely beset, they ordered their two hundred

men-at-arms to face about, while MM. de Gié and Trivulce at the other end, that is to say the head of the army, ordered a halt, and gave the word to put lances in rest. Meanwhile, in accordance with custom, the King, stationed in the centre of his host, knighted those gentlemen who, by reason of their personal gallantry, or of his regard for them, were deemed worthy of the honor.

Suddenly there was a terrible crash behind him; it was the French rear coming to close quarters with the Marquis of Mantua. In that onset every man selected his opponent as in a tourney, and a great many lances were broken, especially in the hands of the Italian knights, for their lances were hollow in order to save weight, and were consequently much more easily broken. Those who were disarmed at once drew their swords, and as they were vastly more numerous than our troops, they soon overwhelmed our right wing before the King's eyes and seemed in a fair way to envelop us altogether. At the same time there was a tremendous outcry directly abreast of our centre, caused by the Stradiotes crossing the river to execute the part allotted to them in the program.

The King at once divided his main body into two detachments and placing one under the command of the Bastard of Bourbon to repel the assault of the Stradiotes, he himself hurried with the other to the relief of the rear-guard. He rushed into the thickest of the melée, striking with the bearing of a king, but fighting like the most impetuous and daring of his captains. With the relief thus afforded them the rear-guard stood their ground, although the enemy were five to one and the battle, at that point, was maintained with extraordinary fury.

Following out his orders, the Bastard of Bourbon set out at the double-quick to intercept the Stradiotes; but his horse ran with him and carried him so far into their ranks that he was lost to sight there. The loss of their leader, in conjunction with the strange costume of their new antagonists and their peculiar method of fighting, produced some impression upon those who were sent to oppose them, so that for a moment there were signs of disorder about their centre, and the horsemen scattered, instead of pressing close together and fighting in a solid mass. This momentary confusion might well have proved fatal to them, had not the Stradiotes, or the greater part of them, seeing the baggage-train standing alone and undefended, made a rush for that, in the hope of rich booty, instead of following up their advantage. However, a portion of them remained to be reckoned with, and pressed the French cavalry hard, cutting their lances through with their terrible scimiters.

Fortunately the King, having repulsed the attack of the Marquis of Mantua, could give his attention to what was going on behind him; galloping back at full speed to the relief of his centre, he fell upon the Stradiotes with the gentlemen of his household, no longer armed with his lance, for it was broken, but with his long sword, which gleamed around him, now on this side, now on that, like flashes of lightning. Whether he was carried away by his horse, or allowed his excitement to get the better of him, he found himself suddenly where the Stradiotes were thickest, accompanied only by eight of the gentlemen whom he had just knighted, one of his squires named Antoine des Ambus, and his standard bearer. He shouted "France! France!" at the top of his voice, to summon to his side all the scattered horsemen, who, seeing that the danger was not so great as

they thought, were beginning to take their revenge, and to repay the Stradiotes with interest the blows they received.

Affairs were progressing still more favorably with the vanguard, which was attacked by the Count of Cajazzo. Although he commanded a division much superior in number to the French, and seemed at first to be seriously bent upon mischief, he stopped short in the act of charging when within ten or twelve paces of our line of battle, and executed a *volte-face* without breaking a lance. The French were eager to pursue him, but the Maréchal de Gié, fearing that the retreat was nothing more than a trap to draw the van away from the centre, ordered every man to keep his place. The German Swiss, however, not understanding the order, or not taking it to be meant for them, darted in pursuit and, although they were on foot, overtook the fugitives and cut down a hundred or more; this was enough to throw the rest of them into such confusion that some of them scattered about over the plain, and others threw themselves into the river to swim across to their camp.

Thereupon De Gié detailed a hundred men-at-arms to go back to the assistance of the King, who was still fighting on with incredible daring, and incurring most tremendous risks, separated as he constantly was from his gentlemen, who found it impossible to follow him; for he rushed headlong wherever there was danger, crying "France!" and caring but little whether anybody followed him or not. He was no longer fighting with his sword, which was long since broken like his lance, but with a heavy battle-axe, every blow of which was fatal, whether he cut with the edge or thrust with the point. The Stradiotes, already hard pressed by the King's household and pensioners, passed soon from offensive to

defensive operations, and from the latter to flight. This was the moment when the king was in the greatest danger; for, having yielded to his impulse to pursue the fugitives, he soon found himself quite alone, and entirely surrounded by these men, who, had they been less panic-stricken, would have needed only to close in on him to crush him and his horse to death. But, as Commines said, "He is well guarded whom God guards,"—and God guarded the King of France that day.

The rear-guard was in serious trouble at this time, and although MM. de Guise and de Trémouille stood their ground as staunchly as it was possible to do, it is probable that they would have been forced at last to yield to superior numbers if succor had not arrived from two different quarters. In the first place, the indefatigable Charles, having no farther business with the fugitives, threw himself once more into the thick of the battle; and secondly, the servants in charge of the baggage, being delivered from the Stradiotes, came running up, armed with the axes which they used to cut wood for camping purposes, and rushed into the melée, hamstringing the horses, and demolishing the visors of dismounted horsemen.

The Italians could not withstand this twofold onset; the "French madness" rendered all possible strategic combinations of no avail, and for nearly a century they had been unlearning what they knew of these fierce, bloody conflicts, and accustoming themselves to the sort of tournament which they called war; so that, despite the utmost efforts of Francesco de Gonzaga, the assailants of the rear-guard also turned their backs and took to flight, recrossing in great haste and with much difficulty the torrent, swollen more and more by the rain which fell steadily throughout the battle.

Some were in favor of pursuing the enemy, for their army was in such utter confusion that they could be seen from the battlefield, where the French had won such a glorious victory, flying in all directions and thronging the roads to Parma and Bercetto. But Maréchal de Gié and MM. de Guise and de Trémouille, who had borne themselves too gallantly to be suspected of shrinking from an imaginary danger, restrained this impulse, reminding the too eager ones that men and horses were so fatigued that they would run great risk of losing what advantage they had gained if they attempted to carry it any farther. Their opinion prevailed in spite of the arguments of Trivulce, Camillo Vitelli, and Francesco Secci, who were in favor of following up the victory.

The King retired to a small village on the left bank of the Taro, and took up his quarters in a poor house, where he laid aside his armor; of all the army, officers and soldiers, he had done the best and hardest fighting.

During the night the river became so swollen that the Italian army would have been unable to follow up their foes, even had they recovered from their panic. The King, after such a victory, did not wish even to have the appearance of retreating, and remained all day drawn up in order of battle; at sunset he went into quarters at Medesena, a small village about a mile farther down stream than the hamlet in which he passed the first night after the battle. But before morning he came to the conclusion that he had done enough to ensure the honor of his arms, in whipping an army four times as large as his, killing three thousand men, and waiting a day and a half to give them time to take their revenge; and so, about two hours before dawn, he

ordered the fires to be replenished, so that the enemy might think him still in camp, and the whole army, now almost entirely out of danger, moved noiselessly away in the direction of Bergo-San Donnino.

Meanwhile the pope had returned to Rome, where he was soon made happy by the receipt of intelligence which was in perfect accord with the policy he was pursuing. He learned that Ferdinand of Naples had crossed over from Sicily to Calabria with six thousand volunteers and a considerable force of horse and foot, sent to him by Ferdinand and Isabella, under the command of the noted Gonzalvo of Cordova, who arrived in Italy with the reputation of being one of the greatest of generals—a reputation which was destined to be somewhat diminished by the defeat of Seminara. Almost at the same time the French fleet was beaten by the Aragonese fleet, and even the battle of the Taro, though it was lost by the allies, was really a victory for the pope, since it resulted in leaving the path clear for the man whom he looked upon as his most dangerous foe to return to France.

Strong in the conviction that he had nothing more to fear from Charles, the pope sent to him at Turin, where he had halted for a brief space to relieve Novara, a letter wherein he ordered him, by virtue of his authority as supreme pontiff, to leave Italy with his army and to recall the troops he had left in the Kingdom of Naples, and to do both within ten days, under pain of excommunication and of being summoned to appear before him in person.

Charles replied:

1st. That he failed to understand how it could be that the pope, who was at the head of the league, should order him out of Italy, while the troops of the league

not only refused to allow him to pass, but had even attempted (although in vain, as perhaps his Holiness might have heard) to make it impossible for him to return to France.

2d. That, with regard to recalling his troops from Naples, he could not be so blind to his religious obligations as to do that, inasmuch as they entered that kingdom with the consent and blessing of his Holiness.

3d. That, with regard to his being summoned to appear in person in the capital of the Christian world, he was astonished beyond measure that the pope should require it at that time, in view of the fact that, only six weeks before, on his return from Naples, when he was most desirous to have an interview with his Holiness in order to pay his respects to him and demonstrate his true allegiance, his Holiness, instead of granting the favor he requested, had quitted Rome at his approach, with such precipitation, that, do what he would, he was unable to overtake him. However, he would give his Holiness his word, if he would agree to await his coming, to return to Rome as soon as the business which required his return to France should be satisfactorily concluded.

Notwithstanding the tone of haughty raillery which characterized this response, Charles was soon compelled by force of circumstances to comply in part with the pope's missive. Although he received a reinforcement of Swiss, his presence in France was so urgently demanded that he had no choice but to conclude a treaty with Ludovico Sforza, whereby he ceded Novara to him. Gilbert de Montpensier, too, and D'Aubigny, after stubbornly contesting every foot of Calabria, Basilicata and Naples, were finally reduced to the necessity of signing the capitulation of Atella, after a siege of thirty-two

days, on July 20, 1496. The terms provided that all the fortresses and towns in his kingdom then held by the French should be restored to Ferdinand II., King of Naples. But he lived only three months to enjoy them; on the seventh of September following, he died of physical collapse at the Castle of Somma by the foot of Vesuvius, the assiduous, loving care lavished upon him by his young wife, failing to repair the ravages caused by her claims.

He was succeeded by his uncle Frederic. Thus, during the three years since his elevation to the pontificate, and while he was establishing himself more and more firmly in his seat, Alexander had seen five kings upon the throne of Naples:—Ferdinand I., Alphonso II., Charles VIII., Ferdinand II., and Frederic.

Each of these convulsions, and the rapid succession of sovereigns was of the greatest possible advantage to Alexander VI., for every new king was not really king, until he in his turn was invested with kingly power by the pope. The result was that he was the only one who gained in power and influence by all these changes, for not only had he been recognized as the supreme head of the Church, for all his simony, by the Duke of Milan, and the Republics of Florence and Venice, which had made treaties with him, but five kings who had succeeded each other upon the throne of Naples, had severally done homage to him.

He believed, therefore, that the time had come to establish the power of his family upon a firm foundation, by clothing the Duke of Gandia with all the chief temporal dignities, while all the great spiritual functions should be entrusted to Cæsar Borgia. He ensured the success of his new schemes by appointing four Spanish cardinals, who increased the number of his compatriots

like those of the Swiss, but two feet longer, for their ordinary weapons. Vitellozo Vitelli drilled his men in the use of their new weapons for three or four months; when he considered them qualified to make good use of them he marched on Bracciano, his force being augmented by some few troops from the towns of Perouse, Todi, and Narni, which feared that their turn might come after the Orsini were wiped out.

The Duke of Urbino, who had been loaned to the pope by Venice, under the terms of the treaty to which we have referred, was besieging Bracciano; when he heard of Vitelli's approach he thought he would save him part of the journey and marched out to meet him. The armies met on the road to Soriano, and engaged instantly. The papal army comprised a force of eight hundred Germans, upon whom the Dukes of Urbino and Gandia particularly relied, and with good reason, for they were the best troops in the world; but Vitelli set his infantry upon this picked body, and they ran them through with their long pikes without giving them a chance, their weapons being four feet shorter, to return the blows they received. At the same time his light artillery hovered about the flanks of the army, following its most rapid movements, and silencing its guns by the justness and accuracy of their fire. Thus it was that, after a somewhat longer resistance than might have been expected from a force attacked by such superior tactics, the papal troops turned and fled, carrying with them to Roncilione the Duke of Gandia with a severe pike wound in the face, Fabricio Colonna, and the pope's legate; the Duke of Urbino, who was fighting with the rear-guard to protect the retreat, was taken with all the artillery and baggage.

But this success, great as it was, did not turn Vitelli's

head so far as to blind him to the dangers of his position; he realized that he and the Orsini were too weak to carry on such a war, that the paltry store to which he owed his army would soon be exhausted, and that his army would disappear with it. He made haste to apologize for his victory by suggesting terms, which he would not perhaps have been willing to accept had he been beaten. They were at once communicated to the pope who, in the interim, had been advised that Trivulce had recrossed the Alps with three thousand Swiss, and who feared that Vitelli's force might be the advance-guard of the French army. It was agreed, therefore, that the Orsini should pay seventy thousand florins to defray the cost of the war, and that all prisoners on both sides should be exchanged without ransom, except the Duke of Urbino. To secure the payment of the seventy thousand florins the Orsini placed the fortresses of Anguillara and Cervetri in the hands of Cardinals Sforza and San Severino by way of pledge; and as they had not the necessary funds at hand on the day fixed for the payment, they fixed the ransom of the Duke of Urbino at forty thousand ducats, and passed that sum to the credit of Alexander VI., thus nearly balancing the account. The pope kept very strictly to his agreement on this occasion, and made his own general, captured in his service, pay the ransom demanded by his enemies.

The pope, on his side, restored to Charles Orsino and Vitelli, the dead body of Virginio, in default of his living body. By a strange fatality, the prisoner died, a week before the treaty was signed, of the same disease, if we may judge by analogy, which carried off Bajazet's brother.

Just after the signatures were appended to this treaty,

Prosper Colonna and Gonzalvo of Cordova, whom the pope had asked Frederic to send him, arrived at Rome with a force of Spanish and Neapolitan troops. Alexander could not then use them against the Orsini, and was unwilling to have to reproach himself for having sent for them for nothing, so he employed them in retaking Ostia. Gonzalvo was rewarded for this feat of arms by receiving from the pope's own hands, the Golden Rose, the greatest distinction which his Holiness could bestow. He shared the honor with the Emperor Maximilian, the King of France, the Doge of Venice and the Duke of Mantua.

Meanwhile the festival of the Assumption arrived, and Gonzalvo was invited to take part in the celebration. He rode from his palace in regal state to meet the papal cavalcade, and took his place at the left of the Duke of Gandia, whose great personal beauty drew all eyes upon him, enhanced and set off as it was by the magnificent costume he had chosen to assume for this solemn function.

He had a retinue of pages and valets, dressed in liveries of such splendor that nothing comparable to them had ever before been seen even in Rome, the city of gorgeous religious fêtes. They were all mounted upon beautiful horses, covered with velvet trappings, fringed with silver, on which, at equal intervals, were little silver bells. He was arrayed himself in a robe of gold brocade; around his neck was a string of the largest and finest Oriental pearls which ever belonged to a Christian prince, and around his cap a golden chain, hung with diamonds, of which the smallest was worth more than twenty thousand ducats.

His magnificence was the more striking because of the contrast presented by the simple costume of Cæsar

Borgia, whose purple robe could boast no ornament. The result was that Cæsar, already madly jealous of his brother, hated him more intensely than ever as he listened to the words of admiration for his noble bearing and superb appearance which fell upon his ears all along the route of the procession. From that moment the worthy Cardinal Valentino sealed in his own mind the fate of this man whom he was forever finding in the path of his pride, his love and his ambition.

"The Duke of Gandia," thus says Tommaso, the historian, "surely had good reason, the ill-fated youth! to wish to leave in the public mind a distinct and pleasant remembrance of his amiability and magnificence on this festal occasion, for it was the last great function which preceded his funeral rites."

Lucrezia, too, had come to Rome, on the pretext of taking part in this ceremony, but in reality, as we shall soon see, with the view of becoming once more the instrument of her father's ambition.

As the pope was not content that his son should enjoy nothing greater than this vain triumph of ostentation and pride, and as his war with the Orsini did not result as he hoped it might, he determined to augment the fortune of his first-born by doing just what he had reproached Pope Calixtus for doing, in the famous harangue we have quoted; that is to say by cutting off from the dominions of the Church the cities of Benevento, Terracina, and Pontecorvo, and with them forming a duchy to be bestowed upon him as an appanage. This proposition was made by him in consistory, and as the Sacred College was entirely subservient to him, it met with no opposition.

This addition to the honors and emoluments already heaped upon his brother, exasperated Cæsar still more,

although he came in for his share of the paternal favors, being appointed legate *a latere* to Frederic of Naples, in which capacity he was to place the crown upon the King's head in the name of the pope.

Meanwhile Lucrezia, after passing a few days holiday-making with her father and brothers, had gone into strict retirement at the convent of St. Sixtus. No one knew the real reason for this step, nor could Cæsar, whose passion for her was as strange as it was unnatural, prevail upon her to delay it, at least until the day following his departure for Naples. Her obstinacy wounded him deeply, for ever since the day when the Duke of Gandia made his appearance in the procession in his gorgeous attire, he fancied that he had noticed that his incestuous mistress had grown cool toward him, and his hatred for his brother reached such a height that he resolved to rid himself of him at any price. He therefore sent word to the leader of his bravoes to come to him that same evening.

Michelotto was accustomed to these mysterious messages, which almost always meant that there was some passion to be indulged or some plan of vengeance to be carried out. As in either case he was sure to be handsomely paid, he took good care to be punctual and, at the appointed time, he was ushered into his patron's presence.

Cæsar was awaiting him leaning against the corner of a vast fireplace, no longer clad in his cardinal's robe and hat, but in a slashed doublet of black velvet, through which could be seen a satin vest of the same color. One of his hands was playing mechanically with his gloves, while the other rested on the hilt of a poisoned dagger, which was always at his side. It was the costume which he regularly assumed for his nocturnal

expeditions and Michelotto was not surprised therefore to find him wearing it. But his eyes flashed with a more ominous fire than usual, and his cheeks, ordinarily pale, were fairly leaden-hued. Michelotto had but to cast one glance upon his master's face to see that something of dire import was to take place between them.

Cæsar motioned to him to close the door, which he did at once; then, after a moment's silence, during which Borgia's eyes seemed to seek to read to the uttermost depths of the soul of the reckless ruffian who stood with uncovered head before him.

"Michelotto," he said, in a tone in which the only indication of emotion of any sort was the slightly jocose inflection, "how do you think my costume becomes me?"

Well used as the rascal was to the circumlocutions which his master ordinarily made use of before disclosing his real purpose, he was so far from expecting the question that he was speechless for a moment.

"Admirably, Monsignore," he said at last; "it gives your Excellency the appearance of a soldier, to match your heart."

"I am well pleased that you think so," said Cæsar. "Tell me now, do you know whose fault it is that instead of this garb, which I can wear only at night, I am compelled to disguise myself by day in a cardinal's hat and cloak and to pass my time ambling from church to church and from consistory to consistory, when I ought to be leading a noble army upon the battlefield—an army in which you should be a captain, instead of being, as you are, the chief of a band of wretched desperadoes?"

"Yes, Monsignore," Michelotto replied,—he had guessed Cæsar's meaning at once—"the cause of all this

is Monsignore Francesco, Duke of Gandia and Benevento, your elder brother."

"And do you know," continued Cæsar, without any other sign of approval of the bravo's reply than a nod of the head, accompanied by a bitter smile; "do you know who it is who has wealth without genius, a helmet without brains, a sword without strength to wield it?"

"The Duke of Gandia again."

"Do you know who it is who is always an obstacle in the path of my ambition, my fortune and my love?"

"Still the Duke of Gandia."

"What is your conclusion?" Cæsar asked.

"I conclude that he must die," coolly replied the ruffian.

"It is my conclusion, too," said Cæsar, stepping toward him and seizing his hand, "and my only regret is that I did not come to that conclusion long ago. If I had had a sword by my side instead of a crucifix in my hand when the King of France passed through Italy last year, I should have been ruler of some princely domain to-day. The pope desires to exalt his family, that is evident enough, but he is mistaken as to the proper means. I ought to be the duke and my brother the cardinal. If he had made me a duke it is very certain that I would have added to the authority conferred upon me by him, the intrepid courage which would have made that authority effective. He who wishes to attain power and wealth must crush beneath his feet whatever obstacles he encounters upon his path, and press boldly against the sharpest thorns without heed to the agonizing shrieks of his flesh; he must strike with closed eyes, with sword or dagger, to open his road to fortune; he must not fear to dip his hands in his own blood; he must, in short, follow the precedents set by all the

founders of empires from Romulus to Bajazet, both of whom made their power secure by fratricide. Well, Michelotto, as you have well said, I am in the same plight, and I am resolved not to hesitate. Now you know why I sent for you; was I wrong to rely upon you?"

As was to be expected, Michelotto, who saw vast possibilities of future advantage to himself in the crime, replied that he was entirely at Cæsar's orders, and that he had but to specify the time, place and manner of their execution. To this Cæsar made answer that the time must necessarily be very soon, as he was on the point of starting for Naples, and that the place and manner of putting his brother to death must depend on chance; that they must be on the watch and seize the first favorable opportunity.

On the day following that on which this scheme was concocted Cæsar learned that his departure was fixed for Thursday, June 15; at the same time he received an invitation from his mother to sup with her on the fourteenth. The banquet was to be given in his honor on the occasion of his leaving Rome. Michelotto was instructed to be in readiness at eleven o'clock on the evening in question.

The table was spread in the open air at a beautiful villa owned by Vanozza, near St. Peter-in-Vinculis. The guests were Cæsar Borgia, the hero of the hour; the Duke of Gandia, the Prince of Squillace and Donna Sancia, his wife; the Cardinal of Mont-Real, Francesco Borgia, son of Calixtus III.; Don Rodrigo Borgia, governor of the apostolic palace; Don Godefroy, brother of Cardinal Giovanni Borgia, then legate at Perouse, and Don Alphonso Borgia, the pope's nephew. The whole family was present, except Lucrezia, who had refused to come, being still at the convent.

It was a superb feast. Cæsar displayed his customary gayety, while the Duke of Gandia seemed even more light-hearted and joyous than ever before.

While they were still at table a masked man brought Francesco a letter. He broke the seal, fairly beaming with pleasure and, after running his eye over the contents, replied simply: "I will be there," and then quickly thrust the precious paper into the pocket of his doublet. But, make what haste he might to conceal it, Cæsar had time to catch a glimpse of it, and fancied that he recognized Lucrezia's handwriting.

Meanwhile the messenger had withdrawn unnoticed by all save Cæsar; for it was customary in those days to send love messages by men whose faces were covered by masks or by women closely veiled.

At ten o'clock they rose from the table and, as the air was extremely mild and clear, they strolled about for some time under the magnificent pines which afforded bountiful shade to the Vanozza's mansion, but Cæsar did not once lose sight of his brother. At eleven, the Duke of Gandia bade his mother good-night, and Cæsar followed his example on the pretext that he had still to go to the Vatican to take leave of the pope, a filial duty which he could not postpone till the morrow as he was to leave Rome at daybreak. This excuse was the more readily accepted because the pope never retired until two or three o'clock in the morning.

The two brothers went out together, mounted the horses which awaited them at the door and rode side by side as far as the Borgia palace, then occupied by Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, to whom Alexander presented it on the eve of his election to the papacy. There the Duke of Gandia and his brother parted, the former saying with a smile that he did not expect to return home as he had

a visit to pay to a certain fair one, who was awaiting his coming. Cæsar replied that he could employ his time as he thought fit, and wished him good-night.

Francesco turned to the right and Cæsar to the left, and Cæsar noticed that the street which his brother took led to the monastery of Saint-Sixtus, where Lucrezia was then living. With his suspicions confirmed by this fact, he made the best of his way to the Vatican, where he took leave of the pope and received his blessing.

From that moment nothing certain is known of the terrible deed which we are about to describe; it is shrouded in mystery as impenetrable as the darkness in which it was perpetrated.

The following is what is generally believed to have happened:

When he parted from Cæsar, the duke sent away his people, keeping with him a single confidential servant, in whose company he rode on to the Square of Guidecca. There he found the same masked man who brought him the letter; he bade his servant attend him no farther, but to await his return on the square, where he would take him up in two hours or thereabouts. At the appointed time he did return, dismissed the masked man and started to ride back to his palace; but he had no sooner turned the corner of the Jews' Ghetto than four men on foot, led by a fifth, who was mounted, rushed upon him. Believing that he had to do with robbers, or was the victim of a mistake, he gave them his name, but, instead of staying their daggers, the name made them redouble their blows and the duke soon fell dead by the side of his dying valet.

Thereupon the mounted man, who had looked on in cold impassibility while the foul deed was done, forced his horse to back toward the body, which the four

murderers laid across his saddle behind him; then they walked beside the horse to hold it in place, and the whole party plunged into the lane which leads to the Church of Santa-Maria in Monticelli.

The unfortunate valet was left for dead upon the pavement; but a moment after they had gone he recovered his strength sufficiently to groan, and his groans were heard by the occupants of a house near by, who carried him in and laid him on a bed, where he expired almost immediately without giving any information as to the murder or its perpetrators.

The Duke of Gandia's household awaited his return all night and all the following morning; then their expectations changed to dread, and their dread soon became downright alarm. They went to the pope and told him that his son had not returned to his palace since he left his mother's house, but Alexander tried to deceive himself all the rest of the day with the vain hope that daylight had surprised him in some love adventure and that he was waiting for darkness to cover his return.

But the night passed without any news of him; and on the following day the pope, a prey to the gloomiest forebodings, and driven mad by the loudly expressed popular belief that a great calamity had befallen him, abandoned himself to utter despair, and could find nothing to say amid his sighs and sobs but these words, which he repeated a thousand times:

"Search for him, search for him, and find out how the poor boy met his death!"

Everyone thereupon joined in the search, for the duke was a general favorite; but, search as they might, from one end of the city to the other, they could find nothing but the body of the duke's valet; of the master there

was no trace. It was believed, therefore, and with good reason, that he had probably been thrown into the Tiber, and they began to follow down its banks from Via della Ripetta, questioning all the boatmen and fishermen, who were in a position to see, from their houses or their boats, what took place on the shores of the river during the two preceding nights.

At first all their questioning was barren of results, but when they reached a point about opposite Via della Fantanone, they finally found a man who said that he saw something during the night of the fourteenth and fifteenth which might possibly have some bearing upon what they desired to know. He was a Slavonian named Giorgio, who was taking a load of wood up river to Ripetta. These are his own words:

"Signori," he said, "after I unloaded my wood on the bank Wednesday evening, I remained in my boat, enjoying the cool night air, and watching to see that nobody made off with what I had unloaded; it was about two in the morning when I saw two men on foot come out of the lane to the left of the Church of St. Jerome. They walked out into the middle of the street, and by the care with which they looked about in every direction, they proved that they came out only to see if anyone was passing. When they were certain that the locality was deserted, they went back into the lane, and soon after two others came out, using the same precautions to make sure that there was nothing in sight. Finding everything as they wished to find it, they signed to their comrades to join them. Thereupon, a man on a dapple gray horse rode out, with the body of a dead man lying across his saddle behind him, the head and arms hanging down on one side, and the feet on the other, the hands and feet being held by the two men

who first came out to reconnoitre. The three drew near the river while the others watched the street; they went to the spot where the city drain discharges into the Tiber, the horseman turned his horse so that his tail was toward the stream, and the men at his sides took the body by the hands and feet, and swung it back and forth thrice. At the third swing they threw it with all their strength into the river.

"When he heard the splash of the heavy body falling into the water, the horseman asked: 'Is it done?' and the others replied: 'Yes, my Lord.' Thereupon he wheeled his horse around, and seeing the dead man's cloak floating on the surface, he asked what that black thing was.

"'It's his cloak, my Lord,' said one of the men, and another ran to the part of the bank nearest to it and threw stones at it until it sank. As soon as it disappeared, they moved away and, after going along the street a few steps, turned into the lane which leads to St. James. That is all I saw, Signori, and I can make no further answer to your questions."

These words removed the last hope of those who still cherished any hope; but one of the pope's retainers asked the Slav how it was that after witnessing such a transaction he did not report it to the governor. He replied that since he had been plying his trade upon the river he had seen a hundred dead bodies thrown in in much the same way, but had never heard that anybody was at all disturbed over it; so he supposed that it would be the same with this one as with all the others, and he did not deem it his duty to speak of it.

Acting upon this information his Holiness' people immediately assembled all the boatmen and fishermen on the river, and promised so handsome a reward to the

one who should find the duke's body that they soon had more than a hundred engaged in the search. Before nightfall of the same day, which was the Friday, two bodies were taken from the water, one of which was identified as that of the ill-starred Francesco.

A single glance at the body left no doubt as to the cause of death. It was pierced with nine wounds; the most serious one was in the throat and the jugular artery was severed. His clothes were not disturbed; he was wearing his doublet, his gloves were in his belt, and his money in his purse; therefore the motive for the deed was revenge, not robbery.

The boat which bore the body ascended the Tiber to the Castle of San-Angelo, where it was taken ashore. The gorgeous suit which was worn by the duke the day of the procession was brought from his palace, and they clothed him in it, and laid by his side the insignia of the vicar-generalship of the Church. His body lay exposed to view all day, but his distracted father had not the courage to go and look upon him. At last, when night fell, his most faithful and most trusted retainers carried him to the Church of the Madonna del Popolo, with all the pomp which court and church, acting in concert, could bring to the obsequies of the pope's son.

Meanwhile Cæsar Borgia was placing the crown upon the head of Frederic of Aragon, with his blood-stained hands.

This blow wounded Alexander to the heart's core. As he had no idea at first upon whom suspicion ought to rest, he gave the strictest orders that the murderers should be brought to justice; but ere long the lamentable truth forced itself upon him. He saw that the blow dealt his family came from the very bosom of the family itself, and his despair changed to frenzy. He

ran like a madman through the apartments and corridors of the Vatican, and bursting into the consistory, with his garments torn and his hair covered with ashes, he confessed all the irregularities of his past life, and admitted that God inflicted merited punishment upon him by thus inciting his own flesh and blood to rend itself. Then he withdrew to one of the most secluded and darkest corners of the palace and shut himself up there, saying that he proposed to starve himself to death. As a matter of fact he took no food by day, and no rest by night for more than sixty hours, replying to those who knocked at the door and begged him to live, with groans as weak as a woman's, or the roar of a lion. At last Guilia Farnèse, his latest mistress, who was called Guilia Bella, finding that she could not move him, was forced to send for Lucrezia, the daughter whom he loved with a two-fold love, to overcome his mortal obstinacy.

Lucrezia emerged from her solitude where she was bewailing the death of her brother, to try and comfort her father. At the sound of her voice, the door opened, and not till then could the Cardinal of Segovia, who had been kneeling on the threshold the better part of a day, entreating his Holiness to take heart, not till then, we say, was he able to enter the room with servants bearing food and wine.

Three days and three nights the pope remained alone with Lucrezia; then he reappeared in public, calm, if not comforted. Guicciardini says that his daughter made him see that it would be dangerous for him to make too public a display before the assassin, who would soon return, of his boundless affection for the victim.

Meanwhile Cæsar Borgia was staying on at Naples,

in order to give his father's grief time to grow calmer, as well as to carry through a new mission with which he was entrusted, and which was nothing less than the negotiation of a marriage between Lucrezia and Don Alphonso of Aragon, Duke of Bicelli and Prince of Salerno, the natural son of Alphonso II. and brother of Donna Sancia. To be sure Lucrezia was already married to the Lord of Pesaro; but she was the daughter of a father who had received from heaven the right to bind and to unbind, so that there was no occasion to worry about trifles. When everything was ready for the new betrothal, the divorce would be forthcoming; Alexander was too clever a politician to leave his daughter married to a son-in-law who had become useless to him.

Toward the end of August they learned that the legate, having accomplished his mission to the new king to his perfect satisfaction, was about to return to Rome. He arrived on the fifth of September, less than three months after the death of the Duke of Gandia, and on the sixth he went from the Church of Santa-Maria-Novella, at the door of which the cardinals, and the ambassadors of Spain and Venice were awaiting him on horseback, according to custom, to the Vatican, where his Holiness was then presiding over the consistory. He entered the apartments where that body was in session, and was received by the pope, who bestowed his blessing upon him, and embraced him, in accordance with the ceremonial. Then, still accompanied by the cardinals and ambassadors as before, he was escorted to his apartments, and went thence, as soon as he was left alone, to those of the pope. They did not speak together at the consistory, and the father and son had a thousand things to say to each other, but not, as one might think,

of the Duke of Gandia; his name was not mentioned between them on that day nor afterwards, any more than if he had never existed.

It should be said that Cæsar was the bearer of good news. King Frederic gave his consent to the proposed union, and the marriage between Sforza and Lucrezia was annulled on the ground of impotence. He also authorized the exhumation of Djein's body, which, as the reader will remember, was worth three hundred thousand ducats to the pope.

Thereafter, as Cæsar had hoped and expected, he succeeded to the power and influence in the pope's counsels which the Duke of Gandia had exerted, and the Romans were not slow to feel the effects of the change in the rapid strides which Rome made toward utter demoralization. It was a constant succession of fêtes, balls and masquerades; of hunting parties on a vast scale of magnificence, at which, Cæsar, who was beginning to lay aside his cardinal's robe from time to time, perhaps because the color fatigued him, appeared in a coat cut after the French fashion, attended, in regal state, by cardinals, ambassadors, and guards. Thus it came about that the papal city, wholly engrossed like any courtesan, in her lewd orgies and debauchery, had never been (says the Cardinal of Viterbo), even in the days of Nero or Heliogabalus, more aflame with sedition, more deeply sunken in riotous living, or more stained with blood. Never had the hand of God borne so heavily upon her, never had she been so dishonored by informers, never had her streets been so infested by bands of hired ruffians. Robbers were so numerous, and so bold that to go beyond the city gates was to court death, and even within the walls one was no longer safe. Neither house nor fortress

afforded sure asylum. There was no law nor justice. Gold, brute strength, and license were kings in Rome.

Meanwhile gold was melting away in these fêtes as in a fiery furnace, and by a just dispensation of heaven Alexander and Cæsar began to look with covetous eyes upon the fortunes of the very men whose simony had effected their elevation to the point they had reached. The first trial that they made of this new method of coining money was upon the Cardinal of Cosenza. The pretext was as follows:

A papal dispensation had been granted some time before to a professed nun, the last heiress of the crown of Portugal, to lay aside the veil and marry a natural son of the last king. This marriage was prejudicial to the last degree to the interests of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, and they sent ambassadors to Alexander to complain of such a proceeding just at the time that a marriage was about to be contracted between the House of Aragon and the Holy See.

Alexander realized the force of their complaints, and determined to set himself right with them. He consequently denied all knowledge of the dispensatory letter, for signing which he had received sixty thousand ducats, and accused the Archbishop of Cosenza, secretary of the department having cognizance of such matters, of sending a forged dispensation. Upon that charge the archbishop was taken to the Castle of San Angelo, and a prosecution was instituted.

As it was by no means a simple matter to prove such a charge, especially if the archbishop should persist in asserting that the pope actually signed the dispensation, they resolved to practice upon him a trick which could hardly fail of success.

One evening the Cardinal of Cosenza received a visit

in his cell from Cardinal Valentino. With the unaffected affable air, which he knew so well how to assume when it would be useful to him, he pointed out to the prisoner the embarrassment of the pope, and that no one but himself, whom his Holiness looked upon as his best friend, could extricate him from it.

The archbishop replied that he was entirely at his Holiness' service.

Thereupon Cæsar seated himself at the other side of the table upon which the prisoner was leaning with his head in his hand, when he entered, and dilated at length upon the dilemma of the Holy See. Beyond question it was a perplexing one. At the very moment of ratifying so important an alliance with the House of Aragon, as that of Alphonso and Lucrezia, they could not confess to Ferdinand and Isabella that for a few paltry ducats his Holiness had signed a dispensation which brought together in the hands of the husband and wife all the legitimate claims to a crown upon which Ferdinand and Isabella had no other claims than those of conquest. This confession would inevitably break off all negotiations and the pope's family would bring about its own fall by making impossible an alliance which ought to be the basis of a vast augmentation of its greatness.

The Archbishop of Cosenza therefore would readily see what the pope hoped for as the fruit of his devotion and good-will; it was nothing more nor less than a simple admission on his part that he had supposed that he might take it upon himself to grant the dispensation.

As the penalty to be paid for an offence of that nature was entirely within the discretion of Alexander, the culprit would readily see that the sentence would be as mild as any father could inflict. Furthermore the

reward was in the same hands as the sentence, and if the sentence were such as might be expected from a father, the reward would surely not be unworthy of a king. It would be nothing less than to be present as legate, and with the title of cardinal, at the wedding of Lucrezia and Alphonso, an honor which would be no more than his due, because the marriage would not take place except for his self-sacrificing devotion.

The Archbishop of Cosenza knew the men with whom he had to do; he knew that they would hesitate at nothing to gain their ends; he knew that they had a powder with the taste and odor of sugar, the presence of which in food could not be detected, and which killed slowly or quickly, as they chose, without leaving a trace; he knew the secret of a poisoned key which was always on the pope's mantel, so that, when his Holiness wished to be rid of one of his intimates, he would order him to go and open a certain drawer—the handle of the key was supplied with a small, sharp point and, as the lock of the drawer was hard to turn, it was necessary to grasp the key firmly and use force, when the lock would yield and the victim noticed nothing save a slight scratch; but that scratch was fatal. He knew, too, that Cæsar wore a ring formed of two lions' heads, and when he shook hands with one of his friends, he would turn the stone inward, the teeth of the lion would thereupon become the teeth of a serpent, and the friend died, cursing the whole race of Borgias.

He yielded, therefore, partly through fear, and partly because he was dazzled by the promised reward; and Cæsar returned to the Vatican, armed with the precious paper wherein the Archbishop of Cosenza avowed that he, and he alone, was responsible for the dispensation granted to the nun of royal blood.

Two days later, by virtue of the evidence furnished by the archbishop himself, the pope, in the presence of the Governor of Rome, the auditor of the apostolic chamber, and the principal law officers, pronounced sentence upon him. He was condemned to be deprived of all his benefices and all his offices in the hierarchy, to be dismissed in disgrace from all the orders of which he was a member, and to suffer confiscation of all his property; his person was to be turned over to the civil magistrate.

Two days later that functionary visited the prison to perform his duty, according to the instructions given him by the pope. He entered the archbishop's cell, followed by a clerk, two servants and four guards. The clerk unfolded a parchment which he held in his hand and read the sentence; the two servants stripped the prisoner of his episcopal garb, and took from a parcel a frock of coarse, white cloth, drawers of the same material, and a pair of heavy shoes, in which they dressed him. Then the guards took charge of him and carried him off to one of the deepest and darkest dungeons in the Castle of San Angelo, where he had no furniture except a wooden crucifix, a table, a chair, and a bed; nothing to entertain him except a lamp, a bible, and a breviary; and nothing to sustain his inner man save two pounds of bread and a keg of water, which were supplied him every three days, as was a bottle of oil for his lamp.

Before a year had passed the poor archbishop died of despair, after he had actually gnawed his flesh in his agony.

On the same day that he paid his visit to the dungeon, Cæsar Borgia, for his clever management of the affair, was endowed by the pope with all the property of the condemned man.

(But the hunting parties and the balls and masquerades were not the only forms of entertainment indulged in by the pope and his family. From time to time extraordinary scenes were enacted for their behoof. We will cite but two such, one of which was the public execution of a sentence, the other an incident of the stud, pure and simple. As both are rich in details, for which we would not have the reader think that we have drawn on our imagination, we beg leave to say that they are translated word for word from the Latin journal of Burchard.

"About the same time (the early part of 1499) a courtesan named La Corsetta was imprisoned for having had commerce with a Spanish Moor, who visited her in woman's clothes. To atone for their scandalous conduct, both were taken through the streets, she without shift or petticoat and with nothing to cover her except the Moor's frock, no button of which was buttoned, so that it was entirely open in front; and he in his female garb, with his arms tied behind his back and the skirts turned up above his waist, so that the part which had sinned was exposed to every eye. When they had made the circuit of the city thus, La Corsetta was sent back to prison with the Moor. But on the seventh of April following the latter was dragged out again and taken with two robbers to the Field of Flowers. They were preceded by an archer riding backwards upon an ass and holding in his hand a long pole, to the end of which were fastened the bleeding organs of a Jew, who had been deprived of them because he was detected having commerce with a Christian woman. When they reached the place of execution the two robbers were hanged and the unfortunate Moor was made fast to a stake surrounded with wood, where he was to be burned alive;

but a pouring rain came on and the fire would not burn despite the efforts of the executioner to make it."

This unforeseen accident, which the people took for a miracle, deprived Lucrezia of the most interesting part of the execution; but her father determined to make it up to her later by a spectacle of a widely different nature. We beg to inform the reader once more that the few lines which we purpose to place before his eyes are also translated from the journal of the worthy German, Burchard, who saw in the most harrowing occurrences, as well as the most salacious, nothing but commonplace items, which he jotted down with a scrivener's indifference, without comment and without following them up with any moral reflections.

"On the eleventh of November a certain peasant having come into Rome with two mares loaded with wood, the pope's servants cut the girths just as he was passing through the Square of St. Peter's, so that the wood fell to the ground with the pack saddles. Then they led the mares into a courtyard between the palace and the gate, and opened the stable doors. Four stallions, without bit or bridle, rushed out in pursuit of the mares and, with a mighty neighing and stamping and biting, succeeded in covering them after grievously wounding them. The pope and Madame Lucrezia, who were at the window directly over the palace door, took great pleasure in the struggle, and in the sequel."

(We will follow Burchard's example and abstain from comment.)

The stratagem to which Cæsar had recourse in the matter of his Grace of Cosenza had the desired effect. Ferdinand and Isabella could no longer hold Alexander responsible for signing the dispensation of which they complained, so that no further obstacle arose to the

marriage of Lucrezia and Alphonso. The pope's joy knew no bounds when he became certain of this, for the marriage was of the more importance in his eyes, because he was already dreaming of a second between Cæsar and Donna Carlotta, Frederic's daughter.

Cæsar's every act since his brother's death had demonstrated his unfitness and distaste for the life of a prelate, so that no one was surprised one morning when he entered the consistory, and addressed the pope to this effect. He saw that from his earliest years he had been irresistibly drawn, both by his inclination and his temperament, to secular pursuits, and that it was for no other reason than his wish to obey the absolute commands of his Holiness that he had given his life to the Church, accepted the purple and such other dignities as had been bestowed upon him, and had entered the consecrated ranks of the deaconry; that he realized that at his age and in his situation, it was as unbecoming for him to yield to his desires as it was impossible for him to resist them, and therefore he humbly besought his Holiness to deign to humor his unconquerable inclinations, and permit him to lay aside the ecclesiastical garb and dignities, so that he might become a part of the world once more, and contract a lawful marriage. At the same time he begged their Eminences, the cardinals, to intercede for him with his Holiness, to whom he would voluntarily resign all his churches, abbeys, and livings, as well as all the other dignities and honors connected with the Church which he had received. The cardinals complied with Cæsar's request by unanimously referring the decision of the matter to the pope, and, as may readily be imagined, the pope, like the indulgent father he was, unwilling to force his son's inclination, accepted his renunciation, and granted his petition. Cæsar at once doffed the

purple, which had nothing in common with him, so says Tommaso Tommasi, his historian, save that it is of the color of blood.

Indeed, this renunciation was urgently needed and there was no time to be lost. Charles VIII. on returning from hunting one day, thoroughly exhausted, washed his head with cold water, and then ate a hearty supper. He had an apoplectic stroke immediately after, and died, leaving the throne to the well-meaning Louis XII., who had two great weaknesses, which were equally disastrous in the sequel: one was a thirst for conquest, and the other a longing to have children of his own.

Now Alexander who was always on the watch for every political change, saw at a glance all that he might gain by the accession of Louis XII., and stood in readiness to take advantage of the new king's need of his assistance in fulfilling his twofold ambition. He needed his assistance as a secular potentate in his expedition against the Duchy of Milan, upon which he had a claim, as we have seen, in right of Valentine Visconti, his grandmother. He needed his assistance as the supreme head of the church to annul his marriage with Jeanne, Louis XI.'s daughter, who was barren, and terribly deformed, and whom he took to wife only because he was mortally afraid of her father. Alexander was ready to accommodate him in both respects, and furthermore to place a cardinal's hat upon the head of the king's friend, Georges d'Amboise, if the king would use his influence to induce the young Donna Carlotta, who was at his court, to marry his (Alexander's) son.

This negotiation was far advanced when Cæsar laid aside the purple, and assumed the garb of a layman, which had been so long the constant object of his ambition; and on that very day Monsieur de Villeneuve,

Louis' ambassador, who was to take Cæsar back to France with him, arrived in Rome, and paid his respects to the ex-cardinal, who did the honors of the Eternal City for a whole month, with his accustomed lavish extravagance, surrounding him with all the allurements which he knew so well how to employ for the entertainment of those of whose services he stood in need.

They then set on their journey, preceded by a courier from the pope, whose mission was to order the authorities of all the towns through which they passed to receive them with every mark of honor and respect.

Similar orders had been given throughout France, where the illustrious travelers were honored with so numerous a guard, and where people rushed in such vast crowds to see them pass, that some of Cæsar's suite wrote to Rome from Paris that they had seen neither trees nor houses nor walls in France; nothing but men, women and sunshine.

The king, on the pretext of going out to hunt, rode two leagues out of the city to receive his guest, and as he knew that Cæsar was much attached to the name of Valentino, which he bore as cardinal, and which he still continued to bear with the title of count, although he had resigned the archbishopric whence he originally took the name, created him Duke of Valentinois in Dauphiné, and gave him a pension of twenty thousand francs. After he had bestowed this princely gift upon him, and talked with him for nearly two hours, he left him in order that he might be free to make the impressive entry he had arranged to make.

It was on Wednesday, December 18, 1498, that Cæsar Borgia made his formal entry into the town of Chinon with a display of pomp and magnificence worthy of a

pope's son on his way to espouse the daughter of a king.

The procession was led by twenty-four mules covered with red trappings, which were adorned with shields bearing the duke's arms; they were loaded with carved chests and caskets incrusted with ivory and silver; next came other twenty-four mules, also covered with trappings, but in this instance of the colors of the King of France, which were yellow and red. After these came ten mules, covered with yellow satin with red stripes across, and lastly, ten more covered with striped cloth of gold, on which smooth and rough stripes alternated.

Behind the sixty-eight mules which led the way, sixteen noble war horses came prancing along, led by as many grooms, walking beside them; they were followed by eighteen hunters, ridden by pages of fourteen or fifteen years, sixteen of them being dressed in crimson velvet and two in cloth of gold. (The costume of these last was so rich and costly that it gave rise, if we may believe Brantôme, to grave suspicions in every mind as to the reason for the manifest favoritism shown the two children, who were far handsomer than any of the others.) Behind these eighteen horses came six beautiful mules with harnesses of red velvet, driven by six footmen dressed in velvet like that of which the harness was made.

The third division was headed by two mules covered with cloth of gold, each bearing two chests which were said to contain the duke's treasure and the precious gems he was bringing to the bride he hoped to win, as well as the sacred relics and the bulls which his father had placed in his hands to be delivered to his good friend, Louis XII. They were followed by twenty gentlemen, arrayed in cloth of gold and silver, among whom were

Paolo Giordano Orsino, and other knights and nobles of the States of the Church.

Next came two tabors, a rebec, and four soldiers playing upon silver bugles; and following them, surrounded by twenty-four servants clad in a parti-colored livery of crimson velvet and yellow silk, were Messire Georges d'Amboise and Monseigneur le Duc de Valentinois; the latter arrayed in red satin and cloth of gold thickly studded with pearls and brilliants; on his cap was a double row of rubies as large as beans, which emitted as brilliant and rich a light as the carbuncles of which we read in the Thousand and One Nights; he wore around his neck a necklace worth two hundred thousand francs, and there was not one portion of his attire, even to his boots, which was not trimmed or laced with gold thread and studded with pearls. He bestrode a superb steed of great size, magnificently caparisoned and with a breastplate of golden leaves of superb workmanship, from among which bouquets of pearls and clusters of rubies sprung forth like flowers.

The rear of this gorgeous cortege was closed by twenty-four mules in red trappings, adorned with the duke's arms and laden with silver plate, tents and baggage.

But the one circumstance which more than any other imparted to the whole spectacle an air of reckless and unheard of extravagance, was that all the mules and horses were shod with golden shoes, so insecurely fastened that three-fourths of them remained on the road. Cæsar was much censured for his insolence in thus debasing the metal of which kings' crowns are made by placing it upon his horses' feet.

However, all this pomp and magnificence utterly failed of its effect upon her for whose benefit it was

displayed. When Donna Carlotta was informed that it was the hope of becoming her husband that had brought Cæsar Borgia to France, she replied simply that she would never take to husband a man who was not only a priest himself, but the son of a priest; not only an assassin, but a fratricide, and infamous not only by the very circumstances of his birth, but by his morals and his foul deeds.

But, in default of the haughty Aragonese princess, Cæsar soon found another of noble blood, who consented to become his wife. She was Mademoiselle d'Albret, daughter of the King of Navarre. The marriage, the conditions whereof were that the pope should give two hundred thousand ducats to the bride by way of dowry and should make her brother a cardinal, was celebrated on May 10th. On the day of Pentecost following, the Duc de Valentinois received the collar of the Order of Saint-Michel, which was founded by Louis XI., and was, at that time, the most highly considered of all those in the gift of the King of France.

The news of this marriage, which ensured the alliance of Louis XII., was received by the pope with great satisfaction, and he at once ordered a general illumination and display of fireworks throughout the city.

Louis XII., in addition to his gratitude to the pope for annulling his marriage with Madame Jeanne de France and assenting to his union with Anne de Bretagne, was influenced in his course by the fact that it was absolutely essential to the success of his designs upon Italy to have the pope for his ally. He therefore promised Cæsar that, as soon as he should be in possession of Milan, he would place at his disposal three hundred lances, to be employed as he saw fit and against such persons as he chose, excepting always the allies of

France. The conquest of Milan was to be taken in hand as soon as Louis was assured of the support or even of the neutrality of the Venetians, to whom he had sent ambassadors with power to promise in his name the surrender of Cremona, and of Ghiera d'Adda, as soon as he had conquered Lombardy.

Thus it will be seen that everything on the outside was working favorably for the pushing policy of Alexander VI., when he was suddenly called upon to turn his eyes away from France, and bring them back to the centre of Italy. In the heart of Florence there was a man with no duchy, no crown, not even a sword, whose only power was the power of his intellect, whose only armor his purity of soul, and whose only offensive weapon his voice; and that man was beginning to be a more formidable enemy to the pope than all the kings, dukes or princes on earth were likely to be. It was the poor Dominican monk, Girolamo Savonarola, the same who refused absolution to Lorenze dei Medici because he refused to restore the independence of his native country.

Girolamo Savonarola predicted that the nations beyond the Alps would come over into Italy, and Charles VIII. came and conquered Naples; he predicted that Charles VIII. was threatened by a great calamity, because he failed to fulfill the mission of deliverer which he received from God, and Charles VIII. was dead; and last of all, like him who for eight days walked about the holy city, crying: "Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem!" and on the ninth day cried: "Woe unto myself," so did Savonarola predict his own destruction. But it was not in his nature to flinch from danger, and his resolution to attack the colossus of abomination seated in the chair of St. Peter, did not abate one whit. To each new

scandal, to each new crime, whether it was shamelessly proclaimed in the light of day, or tried to hide its head in the darkness of the night, he never failed to call the attention of the people, and to discharge his anathema at the offspring of bestial passion, or of the pontiff's ambition.

Thus he branded with his scathing censure the latest amour of Alexander with Giulia Farnese, who added a son to his numerous family in the month of April; and called down the curse of heaven upon the murder of the Duke of Gandia, that wicked fratricide caused by the jealousy of an incestuous lover. He pointed out to his compatriots, who were not admitted to the league then in process of formation, what fate they might expect, when the Borgias, having made themselves masters of all the little principalities, should turn their attention to the duchies and republics. Thus Alexander found that he had in him a secular no less than a spiritual foe, and one whose persistent and threatening voice must be hushed at any price.

Vast as the pope's power was, it was by no means a trifling task to accomplish. Savonarola, who preached the doctrine of liberty in its strictest form, had formed a considerable party known by the name of *Piangioni* or *Penitents*, in the very heart of wealthy and dissolute Florence. It was made up of citizens who desired reform in both Church and State, who accused the Medici of having enslaved their country, and the Borgias of having shaken the very foundations of the faith; and who demanded that the republic should be reorganized upon the principle of popular sovereignty, and that the religion should be restored to its pristine simplicity. As to the first of these points great progress had already been made, for, in spite of the other two factions, the

Arrabiati or *Madmen*, which was made up of the richest and noblest young patricians of Florence, who desired an oligarchy, and the *Bigi* or *Grays*, who hoped for the return of the Medici, and who were so called because they conspired in the dark, in spite of them all, we say, the Piangioni had successively obtained an amnesty for all crimes and offences committed under former governments, the abolition of the *balie*, which was a privilege of the aristocracy, the establishment of a supreme council composed of eighteen hundred citizens, and the substitution of popular election for the practice of drawing lots, or irresponsible selection by a few powerful men.

The first measure resorted to by Alexander against the ever-growing power of Savonarola was to pronounce him a heretic, and, as such, to forbid him to preach; but Savonarola avoided the effect of this prohibition by setting up his disciple and friend Domenico Bonvicini of Pescia to preach in his stead. The result was simply that the master's precepts issued from other lips—nothing more—and the seed, although sown by a different hand, fell none the less in soil that was of amazing fertility and quick to give it fruition.

Furthermore Savonarola, establishing the precedent which Luther followed so successfully twenty-two years later, when he burned at Wittemberg the bull of excommunication promulgated by Leo X., soon wearied of keeping silent, and on the authority of Pope Pelagius declared that an unjust excommunication was utterly inefficacious, and that he against whom it was directed need not even take the pains to be relieved from it. He therefore announced, on Christmas Day, 1497, that the Lord had commanded him to throw aside his allegiance, in view of the corruption of the master, and began again to preach at the Cathedral, with greater success than

ever for the very reason that his sermons had been interrupted, and with effects which were the more formidable for being founded upon the sympathy which is always inspired in the masses by unjust persecution.

Thereupon, in order to enforce his prohibition, Alexander applied to Leonardo dei Medici, vicar of the Archbishop of Florence, who, in obedience to orders from Rome, issued a mandate forbidding the faithful to attend Savonarola's preaching. According to the terms of this mandate, those who listened to the words of the excommunicate would not be admitted to confession or communion, and when they died, inasmuch as they would be tainted with heresy because of their spiritual intercourse with a heretic, their bodies would be drawn upon hurdles, and denied Christian burial.

Savonarola appealed from his spiritual superior to the people and to the seignorial body, and those two powers, acting in unison, ordered the archbishop's vicar to leave Florence within two hours. This occurred in the early part of 1498.

The expulsion of Leonardo dei Medici was a signal triumph for Savonarola. Determined, as ever, to employ his increasing influence in the direction of greater purity of morals, he resolved to change the last day of the carnival, a day always theretofore given over to worldly pleasure, into a day of prayer and contrition. The result was that on Mardi Gras a great number of young children assembled in front of the Cathedral, and there separated into small groups, who went from house to house throughout the city, seeking out profane books, lewd pictures, lutes and harps, playing cards and dice, cosmetics and perfumery, and all the thousand and one products of a corrupt society and civilization, with the aid of which Satan sometimes wages war so successfully

upon God. And the good people of Florence, hearkening to the childish voices, brought to the Palazzo di Duomo all these works of perdition, of which there was soon an enormous pile. To this the youthful reformers set fire, singing psalms and hymns the while. There were burned a great number of copies of Boccaccio, and the Morgante Maggiore, and quantities of paintings by Fra Bartolomeo, who, from that day, renounced worldly subjects to devote his brush entirely to the delineation of religious scenes.

Such symptoms of reform were alarming in the extreme to Alexander and he resolved to fight Savonarola with his own principal weapon, eloquence. He selected to take the field against him a preacher of acknowledged talent, named Francesco di Puglia, and despatched him to Florence, where he began to declaim against Savonarola in the Church of Santa Croce, charging him with heresy and impiety. At the same time the pope sent to the seignorial body a letter in which he declared that if they did not interdict the heresiarch from preaching, all the property of Florentine merchants in the papal dominions would be confiscated and the republic itself laid under interdict, and declared to be the spiritual and temporal enemy of the Church.

The seignorial body, abandoned by France, and alarmed beyond measure by the rapid growth of the secular power of Rome, was forced to yield, and intimated to Savonarola that he must cease to preach. He obeyed, and took leave of his hearers in a discourse remarkable for lofty eloquence and firm adhesion to the principles he had struggled so hard to make prevail.

Savonarola's retirement, however, instead of allaying the agitation, served only to augment it; people talked of the fulfillment of his prophecies, and sectaries more

fervent than their master, magnifying his inspiration into the power to perform miracles, proclaimed that Savonarola had offered to go down into the crypt of the cathedral with his antagonist and to prove that his was the true doctrine by raising the dead, promising at the same time to confess that he was vanquished if the miracle should be performed by his opponent. This assertion came to the ears of Francesco di Puglia and, as he was one of those ardent spirits who make no account of life when the sacrifice of their lives may be beneficial to their cause, he declared, in all humility, that he looked upon himself as too great a sinner to hope that God would confer upon him the power to perform a miracle; but he challenged Savonarola to a test of a different sort, by proposing that they should stand together at the stake. He knew that he should perish in the flames, he said, but he would, at least, avenge the sacred cause of the religion, because he was sure that the tempter who had enticed so many souls away to their eternal damnation would perish with him.

This proposition was reported to Savonarola, but as he was not responsible for the first challenge he hesitated to accept the second. His disciple, Brother Domenico Bonvicini, however, more confident than himself in his own power, declared that he was ready to accept the trial by fire in his master's place, being well assured that God would perform a miracle at the intercession of His prophet. On the instant the news that the mortal challenge was accepted ran like wildfire all over Florence. Savonarola's partisans, who were all men of deep convictions, had no doubt of the triumph of their cause. His enemies, on the other hand, were enchanted to have a heretic voluntarily consent to stand at the stake; and

those who were indifferent foresaw in the approaching trial a spectacle of engrossing and horrific interest.

But the self-sacrificing devotion of Brother Bonvicini of Pescia did not meet the views of Brother Francesco di Puglia; he was willing to die a horrible death, but only on condition that Savonarola should share it with him. What cared he for the death of so obscure a disciple as Brother Bonvicini? It was the master whom he desired to reach, the originator and chief exponent of the heretical doctrine, whom it was necessary to involve in his own destruction. He declared, therefore, that his challenge was to Savonarola alone and that he could by no means agree to play this terrible game in person while his adversary played by proxy.

Thereupon something happened which could hardly have been anticipated; two Francescan monks entered the lists to contend with the disciple in the stead of Brother Francesco di Puglia, who refused to break a lance with any but the master. They were Brother Nicolas Pilly and Brother Andrea Rondinelli. The partisans of Savonarola, when their antagonist was thus reinforced, at once came forward in crowds to offer to submit to the test. The Francescans would not be outdone, and every one espoused the one side or the other, all with equal ardor. Florence seemed transformed into a retreat for madmen; everyone was crying aloud for an opportunity to stand in the fire, and soon it was not the men alone who were flinging challenges at each other, but women and mere children were clamoring to make the experiment.

At last the seignorial body, preserving the rights of the two who had first joined issue, decreed that the strange duel should take place between Domenico Bonvicini and Andrea Rondinelli, the details to be

arranged by ten citizens. The day fixed for the spectacle was the seventh of April, 1498, and the place the palace square.

The judges of the lists made their arrangements like men of experience. A scaffolding five feet high, ten wide, and eighty long was erected at the selected spot. Upon this scaffolding, which was all covered with branches and underbrush, kept in place by low fences made of the driest wood obtainable, they had made two paths, two feet wide at the most, and seventy feet long, the entrance to them being at the end next the Loggia dei Lanzi, and the exit at the other end. The Loggia itself was cut in two by a partition, so that each champion could have a sort of room to himself to make his preparations, just as every actor at the theatre has his dressing-room; but in this case the tragedy to be enacted was no fictitious one.

The Franciscans came upon the square and entered the part set aside for them without any religious demonstration, while Savonarola, on the other hand, led the procession of his followers, clad in the priestly garb in which he was wont to celebrate the sacrament, and holding aloft the consecrated host, which every bystander might see as the structure which contained it was of crystal.

Brother Dominico of Pescea, the hero of the occasion, followed him, crucifix in hand, and all the Dominican monks marched behind him, each with a red cross, singing psalms. Behind the monks came the most considerable citizens of their faction with torches in their hands; for they were so sure of the triumph of their cause that they proposed to set fire to the pile themselves. The square itself was so densely thronged that the crowd overflowed into all the adjoining streets. At doors and

windows nothing could be seen but a sea of heads; the roofs were black with people, and some eager sight-seers had climbed even to the roof of the Duomo, and the platform of the Campanile.

When brought face to face with the test the Franciscans raised so many obstacles that it was clear that their champion was beginning to weaken. The first suspicion to which they gave expression was that Brother Bonvicini might be a wizard, and have upon him some talisman or charm to protect him against fire. They demanded, therefore, that he should be stripped and required to put on other clothes which had been inspected by disinterested witnesses. Brother Bonvicini made no objection whatever, insulting as the suspicion was, but changed his shirt and gown and frock.

When Savonarola handed the host to his champion, the Franciscans at once protested that it was a profanation to expose the holy sacrament to the danger of burning; that it was not included in the agreement, and unless Bonvicini would consent to do without that supernatural assistance, they would refuse to undertake the test. Savonarola replied that for the champion, whose trust was in God, to carry in his hand the same God to whom he looked for preservation, was surely not unnatural. This reply did not satisfy the Franciscans who refused to recede from their claim. Savonarola was equally inflexible in insisting on his right, and after four hours passed in profitless discussion, no progress toward an agreement had been made.

Meanwhile, the people, who had been since daybreak crowded together in the streets, and on roofs and chimney tops, suffering from hunger and thirst, began to lose patience, and their impatience manifested itself in mutterings of discontent which came to the ears of the

champions; whereupon the partisans of Savonarola, certain that a miracle would happen, so great was their faith in him, besought him to grant whatever was demanded. To this he replied that if he were himself to submit to the test, he might be more compliant, but as it was another's life which was in danger he could not take too many precautions.

Two hours more elapsed in vain attempts on the part of his supporters to induce him to reconsider his refusal. At last, as it began to grow dark, and the dissatisfaction of the people became more and more demonstrative, even to the point of threatening, Bonvicini declared that he was prepared to walk through the fire with naught but a crucifix in his hand. This privilege could not in reason be denied him, so Brother Rondinelli was fain to accept the proposition.

Announcement was thereupon made to the people that the champions had come to an agreement, and that the trial would take place at once. The crowd at once calmed down, hoping to be rewarded at last for their long period of waiting: but at that moment a storm, which had been long gathering, burst over their heads with such violence that the fire which had just been lighted was extinguished in an instant, and it was impossible to light it again.

The crowd at once concluded that they had been fooled and their enthusiasm changed to contempt. As they knew nothing of the source of the obstacles which delayed the trial, they laid the responsibility at the door of both champions without distinction.

The seignorial body, anticipating that there would be more or less disorder, ordered the dense crowds to disperse; they did nothing of the kind, however, but remained upon the square, notwithstanding the torrents

of rain which fell, awaiting the appearance of the champions. Rondinelli was escorted from the square, amid a tempest of jeers and a brisk volley of stones. Savonarola, however, thanks to his priestly attire, and the Holy Sacrament which he held in his hand, passed calmly and without molestation through the thickest of the crowd—a miracle as worthy of note as if he had passed unhurt through the blazing pile.

But it was the majesty of the host, and that alone, which protected the man, who from that moment was looked upon as a false prophet; and the mob, spurred on by the *Arrabiati*, who, had for a long while stigmatized Savonarola as a liar and hypocrite, were very loth to allow him to return safely to his convent. And so, on the next day, being Palm Sunday, when he ascended the pulpit to explain his conduct, hooting and ironical laughter and insults assailed him on all sides and he could not obtain silence for a single instant. Soon the shouts which were simply mocking at first, became threatening; Savonarola, whose voice was too weak to rise above the uproar, left the pulpit, and withdrew to the sacristy, whence he returned to his convent, and shut himself up in his cell.

Suddenly a shout arose from the crowd and was repeated by every one within hearing:—

"To Saint Mark's! To Saint Mark's!"

This nucleus of insurrection was reinforced by all the people on its way through the streets, and when it reached the convent surged back and forth against the walls, like the rising tide upon the rocks. Soon the gates, which were closed when the mob appeared, gave way before the mighty strength of the multitude which grinds to dust at the instant of contact whatsoever it touches. The plebeian flood scattered over all parts of

the convent in a second, and Savonarola, and his two disciples, Domenico Bonvicini and Silvestro Maruffi, were seized in their cells, and carried off to prison, amid the jeers and insults of the populace, who, as unreasonable in their hatred as in their enthusiasm, would have liked to tear them in pieces, and whose fury was soothed only by the promise that the prisoners should be compelled by force to undergo the trial which they had refused to undergo voluntarily.

Alexander VI., whose influence we may be sure was largely responsible for this sudden change in the aspect of affairs, although he was not on the spot, had no sooner learned of the disgrace and arrest of Savonarola than he laid claim to him as amenable to ecclesiastical jurisdiction. But the seignorial body were proof against the offers of indulgences with which the pope's demand was accompanied, and insisted that the proceedings against the Dominican should be instituted at Florence; but, to avoid the appearance of removing the culprit altogether from the pontifical jurisdiction, they requested his Holiness to name two judges to sit with the Florentine tribunal. Alexander saw that he could not hope to obtain anything more from the magnificent republic, so he sent Giacomo Turriano of Venice, General of the Dominicans, and Francesco Ramolini, doctor of laws; they were duly instructed beforehand that the judgment they were to deliver must declare Savonarola and his accomplices guilty of heresy and schism, of persecuting holy church, and leading the people astray.

The sequel proved that the obstinacy of the Florentines in asserting their rights was mere bombast to save appearances. The court was made up of eight members, all known to be bitter enemies of Savonarola, and the proceedings began by putting him to the question.

His constitution was so weak and his temperament so nervous and irritable, that he could not endure the torture of the cord, and the agony was so great, when the executioner, after raising him high in the air by the wrists let him fall back to within two feet of the ground, that he confessed that his prophecies were mere conjectures, hoping thereby to obtain a brief respite. To be sure, as soon as he returned to his cell, he protested that his confession was a fabrication extorted from him by his bodily weakness, and his cowardice under torture; and that the real truth of the matter was that the Lord had several times appeared to him during his trances, and revealed to him the things he had predicted.

This protest led to a further application of the torture, and Savonarola again succumbed to the excruciating pain, and retracted. But the instant the cords were removed, and while he was still lying on the mattress in the torture chamber, he declared that his admissions were the work of his executioners, and would recoil upon their heads; and that he protested once more against the acceptance of anything that he might have said or might thereafter say. A third time the question extorted similar admissions, and in the period of repose which followed he retracted as before. The result of it all was that the judges, after they had sentenced him and his two disciples to be burned at the stake, decided that his confession should not be read aloud, as the custom was, when the sentence was carried into effect, for they knew full well that he would give the lie to it again as he had done before; and a contradiction in public from his own lips might have a most disastrous effect, in view of the well-known fickleness of the populace.

On the twenty-third of May the wood was again piled up on the square of the palace, and the multitude assembled

once more, certain that they were not again to be defrauded of the spectacle for which they had waited so long. At eleven o'clock in the morning, Jerome Savonarola, Domenico Bonvicini, and Silvestro Maruffi, were brought to the place of execution, and having first been degraded from holy orders by the ecclesiastical judges, were all bound to the same stake in the centre of a huge pile of wood.

Bishop Pagnanoli then announced to the condemned men that they were divorced from the Church.

"From the Church militant?" queried Savonarola, who was on the point of entering into the Church triumphant by virtue of his martyrdom.

No other words were spoken by either of the victims; for at that moment, one of the *Arrabiati*, a personal enemy of Savonarola, passed through the hedge of guards around the scaffold, snatched the torch from the executioner's hands, and himself set fire to the four corners of the pile. Savonarola and his disciples, as soon as the smoke began to rise, began to intone a psalm, and even after they were completely enveloped in a veil of fierce flame their voices could still be heard, singing the blessed words, which were to cause heaven's gates to open for them.

Thus was Alexander VI. freed from the most redoubtable foe that ever rose up against him; but his thirst for vengeance pursued him beyond the gates of death. The seignorial body, yielding to his instances, ordered the ashes of the prophet and his disciples to be thrown into the Arno; but some half-burned bones were picked up by the soldiers who were stationed about the pile to keep the mob away, and these blessed relics all blackened by flame and smoke are exhibited to this day for the edification of the faithful, who look upon Savonarola as

a martyr to the faith that was in him, even though he is no longer looked upon as a prophet.

Meanwhile the French army was preparing to cross the Alps a second time under the command of Jacques Trivulce. Louis XII. went as far as Lyons with Cæsar Borgia and Giulio della Rovere, whom he had forced to become reconciled to each other, and in the early days of May he sent the vanguard on ahead, soon followed by the main body of the army.

The French force collected for this second conquest consisted of sixteen hundred lances, five thousand Swiss, four thousand Gascons, and thirty-five hundred infantry, levied in all parts of France.

On the thirteenth of August, the whole force, amounting to nearly fifteen thousand men, who were to act in concert with the Venetians, arrived under the walls of Arezzo, and at once laid siege to the town.

Ludovico Sforza was in a terrible plight, and was paying in full the penalty of his imprudence in inviting the French into Italy in the first instance. All the allies upon whom he thought that he could rely for help failed him at the critical moment, either because they were engrossed with their own affairs, or because they were alarmed at the approach of the powerful enemy whom the Duke of Milan had made for himself. Maximilian, who had promised to send him four hundred lances, instead of resuming hostile operations against Louis XII., formed a league with the Circle of Suabia to make war upon the Swiss whom he had declared to be in rebellion against the empire. The Florentines, who had promised him three hundred men-at-arms, and two thousand infantry, if he would assist them to recapture Pisa, receded from their promise under pressure of the threats

made by Louis XII., and promised that sovereign to observe strict neutrality. Lastly, Frederic broke his word, and sent him neither money nor men, preferring to keep his troops to guard his own dominions, because he reasoned, and justly, that if Milan were conquered he would be obliged to defend Naples against a new invasion.

Ludovico Sforza, therefore, was thrown back upon his own resources. But as he was an able general, and an adept in political strategy, he did not give up the game at once. He fortified Annona, Novara and Alexandria with the utmost diligence, sent Cajazzo with a small force into those parts of the Milanais which bordered on the Venetian frontier, and massed his remaining troops upon the Po. But his measures were of no avail against the impetuous advance of the French; in a few days Arezzo, Annona, Novara, Voghierà, Castelnuovo, Ponte Corona, Tortona and Alexandria were taken, and Trivulce was marching upon Milan.

This rapid succession of victories and the near approach of the victorious army, drove Sforza, despairing of his ability to hold his capital, to the determination to retire into Germany with his children, his brother Cardinal Ascanio, and his treasure, which had fallen in eight years from fifteen hundred thousand ducats to two hundred thousand. Before his departure he entrusted the defence of the Castle of Milan to Bernardino of Corte. In vain did his friends urge him to distrust the man; in vain did his brother Ascanio offer to shut himself up in the fortress and hold it to the last extremity. Ludovico refused to make any change in his arrangements, and left Milan on the second of September, leaving in the citadel three thousand foot-soldiers, and sufficient provisions, ammunition and money to enable them to withstand a siege of several months.

Two days after his departure the French entered Milan. Ten days after that Bernardino surrendered the castle before a single shot was fired. Twenty-one days sufficed for the French to gain possession of all the strongholds of their enemy, including his capital city.

Louis XII. received the news of the rapid success of his arms at Lyons, and at once set out for Milan, where he was welcomed with every indication of sincere satisfaction. All classes of the people went out three miles beyond the gates to meet him, and forty children dressed in silk and cloth of gold walked before him, singing hymns written by the poets of the day, in which he was called the royal liberator, and the messenger of liberty. This exuberant joy on the part of the good people of Milan, was due to the fact that Louis' adherents had spread the report that he was rich enough to abolish all imposts. On the day after his arrival he made a trifling reduction in them, bestowed marks of distinguished favor upon several Milanese gentlemen, and gave Trivulce the town of Vigavano, as a reward for his glorious campaign.

Meanwhile, Cæsar Borgia, who had followed Louis in order not to miss his share of the Italian quarry, did not fail, as soon as the king had attained his end, to call upon him to fulfil the promise he had made him. With his proverbial loyalty Louis hastened to redeem his pledge, and at once placed at Cæsar's disposal three hundred lances, commanded by Yves d'Alègre, and four thousand Swiss under the Bailly of Dijon, to assist him in bringing to terms the "vicars of the Church."

The reader will pardon us if we offer a word of explanation as to the new characters whom we are about to bring upon the stage under that designation.

During the everlasting wars of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, and during the long exile of the popes at

Avignon, the greater of the towns and strongholds of Romagna were conquered or usurped by petty tyrants, who were, as a general rule, invested with the title to their newly acquired dominions by the Empire. But as soon as the German influence was driven back across the mountains, and the popes made Rome once more the centre of Christendom, all these petty princes, deprived of their original support, gave in their adhesion to the Holy See, received fresh investiture from the pope's hands, and paid him annual tribute, in return for which they received the title of duke, count or lord, as the case might be, and the general name of "vicars of the Church."

It was a very simple matter for Alexander, by subjecting every act of these gentry during the seven years of his pontificate to the most rigid scrutiny, to find in every case some trifling infraction of the treaty between them as vassals, and their suzerain. He, therefore, presented his grounds of complaint to a court organized for that purpose, and obtained a decree from the judges, to the effect that these vicars of the Church, having failed to abide by the conditions of their investiture, were deprived of their territories which reverted to the Holy See.

But the pope had to deal with men against whom it was much easier to pronounce such a sentence than to execute it; so he appointed the recently created Duc de Valentinois his captain-general, and told him to obtain possession of these territories for himself.

The potentates in question were the *Malatesti* of Rimini, the *Sforza* of Pesaro, the *Manfredi* of Faenza, the *Riarii* of Immola and Forli, the *Varani* of Camerino, the *Montefeltri* of Urbino, and the *Caëtani* of Sermonetta.

The Duc de Valentinois, in order not to let cool the warm friendship which his relative and ally Louis XII. had conceived for him, remained with him at Milan during his sojourn in that city. But after a month of personal occupation the King of France turned his face homeward once more, and the Duc de Valentinois at once ordered his men-at-arms and his Swiss to meet him between Parma and Modena, and set out in hot haste for Rome, to lay his plans before his father, and receive his final instructions.

When he reached Rome he found that his sister Lucrezia's power and importance had increased greatly during his absence; not through her husband Alphonzo, whose future had become extremely uncertain since the rapid success of Louis XII., and whose relations with Alexander were somewhat strained in consequence; but through her father, over whom her influence at this time was greater and more inexplicable than ever. He had named her governor for life of Spoleto and its duchy, with all the privileges, emoluments and income pertaining thereto; and this appointment had so magnified her power and her position that she never appeared in public except with an escort of two hundred of the most illustrious and noble knights and ladies of Rome. Furthermore, as the twofold character of the pope's affection for her was no secret to anybody, the leading prelates of the Church, the habitués of the Vatican, and the familiar friends of his Holiness were her most humble servants; so that cardinals assisted her to alight from her litter or her horse, and archbishops quarreled for the honor of saying mass in her apartments.

It was necessary for Lucrezia to leave Rome to take possession of her new domain; but her father could not endure a long separation from his beloved daughter, and

so he determined to put himself in possession of the town of Nepi, which he long before gave to Ascanio Sforza, as the reader will doubtless remember, as the price of his vote in the Conclave. Ascanio had naturally forfeited the place by adhering to the fortunes of his brother, the Duke of Milan, and the pope invited Lucrezia to join him there, and take part in the fêtes incident to his resuming possession.

The alacrity with which Lucrezia complied with her father's wish in this regard was responsible for the further gift to her of the city and territory of Sermonetta, which belonged to the Caëtani. The gift was kept secret, it is true, because it was necessary in the first place to get rid of the two proprietors of the territory in question, Monsignore Giacomo Caëtano, apostolic prothonotary, and Prospero Caëtano, a young nobleman of great promise. But as they both lived at Rome, and were entirely unsuspecting, believing themselves to be in high favor with his Holiness, the one by virtue of his office, and the other because of his sanguine and courageous nature, the problem seemed not to be difficult of solution. Immediately after Alexander's return to Rome Giacomo Caëtano was arrested upon some trivial pretext or other, and confined in the Castle of San Angelo, where he soon died from the effects of poison, and Prospero was strangled in his own house. By reason of these two deaths, which occurred with such suddenness that neither of the victims had time to make a will, the pope declared that Sermonetta and all the other property of the Caëtani had lapsed to the apostolic chamber, and the chamber sold them to Lucrezia in consideration of the sum of eighty thousand crowns. On the day after the payment her father handed the money back to her. Thus Cæsar found when he reached Rome that his father

had got the start of him in his conquests, although he had made all the possible haste.

There was another individual whose fortunes had reached a prodigious height during Cæsar's stay in France, and that was Giovanni Borgia, the pope's nephew, who had been one of the Duke of Gandia's most faithful friends until his death. It was common gossip at Rome that the young cardinal owed the favors which were heaped upon him less to the brother's memory than to the sister's protection. Here was a twofold reason why Giovanni Borgia should become particularly obnoxious to Cæsar, and he swore a mighty oath in his heart that he should not long enjoy the high office, when he learned that his cousin had been appointed cardinal *a latere*, and had set out from Rome to make the tour of the pontifical States with a retinue of archbishops, bishops, prelates and knights, which would have done honor to the pope himself.

Cæsar had come to Rome only to learn what was going on; so he remained there but three days, and then joined his army on the banks of the Enza with such troops as the pope had at his disposal. He marched at once upon Immola, which place was compelled to make terms, as its masters had withdrawn to Forli. Immediately after the surrender of Immola he marched upon Forli.

There he encountered serious resistance, but it was all inspired by a woman. Catherine Sforza, the widow of Girolamo and mother of Ottaviano Riario had sought shelter in the town, and aroused the courage of the garrison by putting herself under its protection. Cæsar saw that the place was not to be carried by any *coup de main*, but that he must have recourse to a regular siege. He at once began to dispose his forces to that

end, placed a battery of artillery opposite the spot where the walls seemed to him to be least strong, and ordered a continuous fire to be kept up until a practicable breach was opened.

As he was returning to his tent after giving this order he found Cardinal Giovanni Borgia in the camp; he was on his way from Ferrara to Rome, and was unwilling to pass so near him without paying him a visit. Cæsar received him with effusive expressions of delight, and kept him with him three days; on the fourth day he assembled all his officers and courtiers at a grand farewell banquet, and having entrusted his cousin with dispatches for the pope, he took leave of him with the same demonstrations of affectionate esteem with which he welcomed his arrival.

Giovanni set out by post immediately after leaving the table, but when he reached Urbino he suddenly began to feel an indescribable pain and sickness, which compelled him to stop there for a few moments. At the end of that time he felt somewhat better, and resumed his journey, but just as he was driving into Rocca Contrada he was taken ill again, and so seriously that he determined to go no farther. He remained there two days, and then, feeling slightly better, and having learned that Forli was taken and Catherine Sforza made prisoner, he determined to go back to Cæsar and congratulate him on his victory. But at Fossombrune, although he substituted a litter for his carriage, he was compelled to stop a third time, and it proved to be the last. That same day he took to his bed never to rise again, and three days later he was dead.

His body was taken to Rome and interred without display in the Church of Santa Maria-del-Popolo, where the body of his friend the Duke of Gandia awaited

him. Notwithstanding the power and influence the young cardinal had enjoyed, he was no more heard of thereafter than if he had never existed: for thus darkly and without commotion did all those pass out of sight who were whirled away by the headlong torrent of the ambition of that terrible triumvirate whose names were Alexander, Cæsar and Lucrezia.

At about the same time Rome was startled by another murder. Don Giovanni Cerviglione, captain of his Holiness' men-at-arms, a gentleman of noble birth and a gallant soldier, was returning home one night after supping with one Pignatelli, a knight of St. John, when he was set upon by a band of ruffians. One of them asked him his name, and when he gave it, finding that he had not mistaken his man, plunged his dagger into his breast, while another with his sword cut off his head, which fell at the body's feet before the body itself fell.

The governor of Rome complained to the pope of this murder, but he saw by the way in which his Holiness received the information that it would be quite as well for him to say nothing more. So he put a stop to the investigation he had set on foot, and none of the murderers were arrested. But it was currently reported that during his brief stay in Rome Cæsar made an appointment to meet Cerviglione's wife, who was a Borgia, and that her husband having learned of this infraction of her duty to him, went so far as to threaten her and her lover too. His threats were reported to Cæsar, who by substituting Michelotto's arm for his own, from Forli struck down Cerviglione in the heart of Rome.

Another sudden death followed so quickly upon Don Giovanni Cerviglione's, that common rumor did not fail to ascribe it to the same source at least, if not to the same motive. Monsignore Agnelli, of Mantua,

Archbishop of Cosenza, clerk of the chamber, and Vice Legate of Viterbo, having fallen out of favor with his Holiness for some unknown reason, was poisoned at his own table, where he had passed part of the night in social intercourse with three or four guests, while death was already stealing through his veins. He went to bed apparently in perfect health, and the next morning was found dead in his bed. His possessions were incontinently divided into three portions: lands and houses were given to the Duc de Valentinois; Francesco Borgia, son of Pope Calixtus III., secured the bishopric; and the office of clerk of the chamber was sold for five thousand ducats to Ventura Bennassai, a merchant of Sienna, who handed the money over to Alexander and took up his abode at the Vatican the same day.

This last mentioned death served to settle a point of law which was uncertain prior to that time. As Monsignore Agnelli's heirs made some objection to being thus summarily dispossessed, Alexander issued a decree which declared all cardinals and priests incapacitated from making a will, and that all property, the title to which was in abeyance, would thereafter be vested in him.

Meanwhile Cæsar Borgia was brought to a standstill in his victorious career. With the two hundred thousand ducats remaining in his treasury Ludovico Sforza raised a force of five hundred Burgundian men-at-arms, and eight thousand Swiss infantry, with which he returned to Lombardy. Trivulce, in order to hold his ground, was compelled to recall Yves d'Alègre, and the troops Louis XII. loaned to Cæsar, whereupon Cæsar left part of the papal troops in garrison at Forli, and returned to Rome with the others.

Alexander determined that his entry should be a triumphal one, and when he learned that the advance

guard was within a few leagues of the city he sent couriers to request the foreign ambassadors, cardinals, prelates, Roman nobility, and all the members of all the orders, to go out to meet his son with all their retinues, and take part in fitly celebrating the return of the conqueror. It is a well-known fact that the servility of flatterers and time-servers is always even more pronounced than the arrogance of those whom they flatter, and so the pope's wishes were not only complied with, but exceeded.

Cæsar's triumphal entry took place on February 26, 1500. Although it was in the midst of the Jubilee, the fêtes of the carnival began none the less, and were more uproarious and indecent than usual. On the following day, under cover of a masquerade, the conquering hero arranged a new method of gratifying his pride. As if he proposed to claim for himself the genius, the fortune and the renown of the great man whose name he bore, he determined to represent the triumph of Cæsar on the Piazza di Navonne, where the fêtes of the carnival ordinarily took place. He made that square his starting-point, and rode thence through all the streets of Rome, at the head of a procession of antique costumes, and Roman chariots, in one of which he stood, clad in a robe like those worn by the Cæsars, with a golden wreath upon his head, and surrounded by lictors, soldiers and standard-bearers; the latter carrying banners on which was the legend:

"Aut Cæsar, aut nihil."

On the fourth Sunday in Lent, the pope conferred on Cæsar the high and dignified office he had so long coveted, of vicar-general and gonfalonier of the Church universal.

Meanwhile Sforza had recrossed the Alps to the Lake

of Como, amid frantic outbursts of joy on the part of his former subjects, who speedily lost all the enthusiasm which the presence of the French army and the promises of Louis XII. at first aroused in their hearts. The demonstrations were so pronounced in Milan that Trivulce judged it to be unsafe for the French garrison to remain there, and withdrew to Novara. The sequel proved that he was not mistaken, for as soon as the Milanese saw that he was making preparations for departure, there was intense excitement throughout the city, and the streets filled with armed men as if by magic. The French had to force their way through a howling mob, sword in hand and lance in rest, and they were not fairly outside the gates before the people spread out through the surrounding country, following the army with shouts and hooting to the banks of the Ticino.

Trivulce left at Novara four hundred lances and the three thousand Swiss whom Yves d'Alègre brought from Romagna, and with the rest of his army marched to Mortara, where he stopped to await the reinforcements for which he had sent to the king. Ascanio and Ludovico Sforza entered Milan in his wake and were welcomed with tumultuous delight by the whole city.

They lost no time in inaction, wishing to make the most of the popular enthusiasm; Ascanio undertook to reduce the Castle of Milan, while Ludovico crossed the Ticino, and attacked Novara.

Besieged and besiegers were sons of the same nation, for Yves d'Alègre had with him only three hundred French, and Ludovico not more than four hundred Italians, the bulk of each army being made up of Swiss infantry. As a matter of fact the Swiss had been substantially the only foot-soldiers in Europe for six years past, and all the powers indiscriminately drew upon the

vast reservoirs of their mountains, with gold in their hands. The result had been that these hardy sons of William Tell, being thus put up at auction by these cantons, and being taken away by their various engagements from their wild poverty stricken mountains, to be brought in close contact with the wealthiest and most dissolute of nations, although they retained their courage, had lost sight of that rigid adherence to principle which had long caused them to be held up as models of honor and good faith: they had become a sort of merchandise always ready to be sold to the highest bidder. The French were the first to feel the effects of their venality, which was destined later to be so fatal to Ludovico Sforza.

The Swiss contingent of the garrison of Novara established communications with their countrymen in the vanguard of the ducal army, and ascertained that the latter, who were ignorant of the fact that Ludovico's funds were nearly exhausted, were better fed and better paid than themselves; they thereupon agreed to surrender the town, and take service under the Milanese banner, if they could be assured the same pay. Ludovico grasped at the offer, as the reader will readily understand. Novara was turned over to him, except the citadel, which was held by the French lances, and the Milanese army was reinforced by three thousand men.

Ludovico made the serious mistake of delaying to lay siege to the citadel, instead of marching at once with his augmented force upon Novara. The result was that while he was neglecting his opportunities, Louis XII., who had received advices from Trivulce and realized the imminence of his danger, hastened the departure of the French gendarmerie who were already mustered in for service in Italy, sent the Bailly of Dijon to hire more

Swiss, and ordered Cardinal d'Amboise, his prime minister, to cross the Alps and take up his quarters at Asti to hurry on the assembling of the army. The cardinal found a nucleus of three thousand men there, La Trémoville brought him fifteen hundred lances and six thousand French infantry, and lastly the Bailly of Dijon arrived with ten thousand fresh Swiss; so that, including the troops with Trivulce at Mortara, Louis had beyond the mountains the finest army that a king of France had ever brought into the field.

By clever manœuvring this army took up a position between Novara and Milan, thus cutting off the duke's communications with his capital before he was informed that such an army was on foot. He was compelled, therefore, in spite of his inferior numbers, to decide to try the chances of a battle.

But it came to pass as the preparations for a decisive struggle were being actively pushed on both sides, that the Swiss Diet, which had been advised that sons of the same cantons were on the point of flying at each other's throats, sent peremptory orders to all Swiss serving in either army to break their engagements and return to their homes. But during the two months which elapsed between the surrender of Novara and the arrival of the French army before that town, matters had taken on a very different appearance owing to the exhaustion of Sforza's treasury. There was more parleying between the outposts of the two armies, and this time, thanks to the supply of funds sent into Italy by Louis XII., the Swiss in the French service were found to be better fed and better paid than their countrymen. The worthy Helvetians, who were no longer fighting for their independence, were too well aware of the value of their blood to shed one single drop of it unless it was paid for

by its weight in gold: and so they resolved to betray Ludovico as they betrayed Yves d'Alègre, and while the troops levied by the Bailly of Dijon remained true to the French flag, despite the orders of the Diet, Ludovico's mercenaries declared that in fighting against their brothers they should be guilty of rebellion against the authority of the Diet, and render themselves liable to capital punishment—a risk which nothing but the immediate liquidation of their arrears of pay could induce them to undertake.

The duke, whose last ducat was gone, and who was hopelessly separated from his capital unless he could reopen the road thereto by a victory, promised them not only their back pay, but their back pay twice over if they would stand by him in one last effort. Unfortunately his ability to fulfill his promise depended on the uncertain chances of a battle, so that the Swiss declared that they had too great a respect for the constituted authorities of their fatherland to disobey their commands, that they loved their brothers too dearly to shed their blood for nothing, and that consequently Sforza need no longer rely upon them, as they had decided to start for their respective cantons on the very next day.

Thereupon the duke, seeing that it was all up with him, made a final appeal to their honor, and adjured them at least to include him in the capitulation they proposed to make. But they replied that an attempt on their part to do so, if it did not make the capitulation impossible, would make it less advantageous for them than they had the right to expect, especially in respect to their being indemnified for the loss of their arrears of pay.

At last, however, seeming to be moved by the entreaties of him whose orders they had so long obeyed,

they offered to give him a uniform and hide him in their ranks. This was an absurd proposition, for Sforza was well advanced in years, and very short, so that his presence could not fail of detection among men of whom the oldest was under thirty and the shortest taller than five feet six. However, it was his last resource, and so without discarding it altogether, he sought some means of so modifying it as to make it efficacious. He finally decided to disguise himself as a Cordelier monk, and to pass himself off as their chaplain, mounted on a sorry nag. As Galeasso, of San Severino, his second in command, and his two brothers were all men of average stature, they might hope to pass unnoticed in the Swiss ranks by donning their uniform.

This plan was hardly arranged when the duke was advised that the capitulation between Trivulce and the Swiss was already signed. The mercenaries, who had made no stipulations in favor of the duke and his generals, were to march off on the following morning with their arms and baggage, through the ranks of the French troops: therefore the last hope of the ill-starred Ludovico and his generals was to trust to their disguise, and that they did. San Severino and his brothers took their places in the ranks, while Sforza, enveloped in his monk's cloak, and with the hood pulled down over his eyes, rode with the baggage train.

The march past began. But the Swiss after selling their blood thought it not beneath them to sell their honor. The French were forewarned of the disguise of Sforza and his generals. All four were recognized and Sforza was made prisoner by La Trémoville himself.

It was said that the price of this treachery was the town of Bellinzona, which belonged to the French;

certain it is that the Swiss took possession of it on their way back to their mountains, and that Louis XII. made no attempt to retake it from them.

When Ascanio Sforza, who, as we have seen, had remained at Milan, learned of this cowardly desertion, he considered that the game was lost, and that the best course for him to pursue was to make his escape before one of the sudden changes of temper, so common among the common people should lead to his being made prisoner by his brother's former subjects, to whom it might occur to purchase their pardon at the price of his freedom. He consequently stole away by night with the principal leaders of the Ghibelline nobility, and went toward Plaisance, on his way to the kingdom of Naples. But when he reached Rivolta he remembered that an old friend of his boyhood lived there—one Conrad Lando, whom he had loaded with favors in his days of prosperity. As he and his companions were fatigued beyond measure, he resolved to seek hospitality at his hands for one night.

Conrad received them with a show of unbounded delight, and placed his house and his household at their service. But they had no sooner retired, than he sent a messenger to inform Carlo Orsino, commandant of the Venetian garrison at Plaisance, that he was prepared to deliver up Cardinal Ascanio and the principal officers of the Milanese army. Orsino did not choose to entrust an expedition of such importance to anybody but himself, so he at once took horse with twenty-five men, and, having surrounded Conrad's house, entered the apartment occupied by Ascanio and his companions, sword in hand. They were surprised in their sleep and made no resistance. They were at first taken to Venice, but Louis XII. claimed them, and they were given up to him.

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Thus the King of France had in his power both Ludovico and Ascanio Sforza, as well as Hermes, a legitimate nephew of Francesco Sforza the Great, two bastards named Alexander and Contino, and Francesco, son of the ill-fated Giovanni Galeasso, who was poisoned by his uncle.

To make an end of the whole family at a stroke, Louis XII. compelled Francesco to enter a convent, cast Alexander, Hermes and Contino into prison, and immured Ascanio in the tower of Bourges, while the unfortunate Ludovico, after being transferred from the fortress of Pierre-Encise to Lys Saint-Georges, was finally relegated to the castle of Loches, where, after ten years of captivity, in utter solitude and destitution, he died, cursing the hour when it first occurred to him to invite the French into Italy.

The news of the downfall of Ludovico and his family gave unalloyed satisfaction at Rome; for, by consolidating the power of the ultramontanes in the Milanais, it solidified that of the Holy See in Romagna, as there was no longer any opposition to be apprehended to Cæsar's conquests. Handsome presents were made to the couriers who brought the good tidings, which were proclaimed throughout the city to the sound of trumpet and drum.

Shouts of "France! France!" and "Orso! Orso!" the rallying cries of Louis XII. and the Orsini respectively, filled the air in every direction, and the streets were all illuminated in the evening, as if Constantinople or Jerusalem were taken. The pope provided fêtes and displays of fireworks for the people, calmly oblivious of the fact that it was Holy Week, and that the Jubilee had drawn to Rome more than two hundred thousand people, so much more important did the worldly interests

of his own family seem to him than the spiritual interests of his subjects.

One thing only was lacking to ensure the success of the vast schemes which the pope and his son were building upon the friendship and alliance of Louis XII., and that one thing was money. But Alexander was not the man to be embarrassed by such a bagatelle. To be sure the sale of benefices had been worked until it would yield no more, the ordinary and extraordinary taxes were collected for the whole year, and but a paltry sum could be anticipated by way of inheritance from cardinals and prelates as the richest of them were already poisoned; but Alexander had other resources which were none the less efficacious because they were less frequently put in practice.

His first device was to spread the report that the Turks were threatening to invade Christendom, and that he was positively sure that the summer would not pass before Bajazet landed two large armies, one in Romagna, and one in Calabria. He therefore issued two bulls, one which provided for the payment to the Holy See of one tithe of the ecclesiastical revenues of every description, throughout Europe, and another calling upon the Jews to contribute the same proportion of their incomes; both bulls threatened those who refused to comply, or who undertook to resist, with excommunication in its harshest form.

The second expedient was the sale of indulgences, a thing which had never before been resorted to. The necessity for such indulgences was extreme in the cases of those whom ill health or poverty prevented from coming to Rome during the Jubilee. This happy thought made it unnecessary to take the journey, and for a third of the sum it would have cost their sins were remitted

as completely, as if they had complied with all the conditions of their pilgrimage. A veritable army of collectors was detailed to gather in the income arising from this source, and a certain Ludovico della Torre was placed at the head of it. The sums which poured into the papal treasury are quite incalculable; a vague idea of their amount may be formed if we say that the territory of Venice alone paid on this account seven hundred and ninety-nine thousand pounds' weight of gold!

Meanwhile the Turks did make some demonstration in the direction of Hungary and the Venetians feared that they might eventually fall upon them, so they applied to the pope for aid. He ordered that, in all his dominions, an *Ave Maria* should be said at mid-day, to implore God to avert the danger which threatened the most serene republic. That was the extent of the assistance the Venetians obtained from his Holiness in return for the seven hundred and ninety thousand pounds' weight of gold he received from them.

But as if God wished to impress upon His incongruous representative, that He was sore displeased by such mockery of sacred things, an enormous piece of iron fell at his feet from the roof of the Campanile, as he was passing by on his way to the Gallery of Benedictions on St. Peter's eve. And again, as if a single warning was not deemed to be sufficient, on St. Peter's day itself, as the pope was sitting in one of the rooms of his suite with Cardinal Capuano, and Monsignore Poto, his private chamberlain, he saw through the open window such a huge mass of black clouds piling up in the heavens, that he anticipated a violent storm and ordered his companions to close the windows. He was not mistaken; for just as they were obeying his orders, there came such a furious blast of wind that the tallest chimney of the

Vatican was blown over like a tree torn up by the roots, and fell upon the roof; it crashed through that and the upper floor, and fell into the very room where they were. At the shock which made the whole edifice tremble, and at the crash which they heard behind them, Cardinal Capuano and Monsignore Poto turned about, and, seeing nothing but a cloud of dust and debris, leaped upon the parapet outside the window, crying to the guards at the door:

"The pope is dead! the pope is dead!"

Servants and retainers hastened to the spot, and found three persons lying among the ruins, one dead and two dying. The dead man was a gentleman of Sienna named Lorenzo Chigi, and the two who were dying, two inmates of the Vatican; they were in a room on the upper floor and fell through the hole made by the falling chimney.

Alexander was not to be found, and as he did not answer their repeated calls, the belief that he was dead became certainty, and the news spread rapidly through the city. But after a short time they heard him groaning, and discovered him just recovering his senses, and wounded in several parts of the body, although not seriously. His life was saved as by a miracle; the ends of the rafter which was broken across the middle remained in the side walls, and one of them formed a sort of roof over the chair, in which the pope was sitting at the time, and protected him so that he suffered nothing more than a few contusions.

The two contradictory reports of the pope's sudden death and his miraculous preservation soon spread throughout the city, and the Duc de Valentinois, terrified at the thought of the great change in his fortunes which the least accident to the Holy Father might bring

about, hurried to the Vatican, to make sure of the truth with his own eyes.

Alexander himself thought proper to give thanks publicly to heaven for the protection accorded him, and on the same day went in state, borne aloft in his pontifical chair by two valets, two squires and two grooms, and escorted by a numerous retinue of prelates and men-at-arms, to the Church of Santa-Maria-del-Popolo, where the Duke of Gandia and Giovanni Borgia were buried. Was it that there was some shadow of religious feeling still remaining in his heart, or was he drawn thither by the memory of his guilty passion for his former mistress, Vanozza, who was exposed to the veneration of the faithful in a chapel at the left of the great altar, in the guise of a Madonna! Before that altar the priest made a gift to the church of a magnificent chalice containing three hundred golden crowns, which the Cardinal of Sienna poured into a silver paten, to the great satisfaction of the papal vanity.

Before leaving Rome to undertake the conquest of Romagna, Cæsar reflected how worse than useless to himself and his father, Lucrezia's marriage to Alphonzo, which they once were so desirous to arrange, had become. Furthermore it was evident that the halt which Louis XII. was making in Lombardy was merely to take breath, and that Milan was simply a relay station on the road to Naples. Now it was very possible that Louis might be annoyed by this marriage which made his enemy's nephew the son-in-law of his ally; whereas, if Alphonzo were dead and out of the way, Lucrezia would be in a position to marry some powerful lord of the Marches of Ferrara or Bresse, who could assist her brother in the conquest of Romagna. Alphonzo, therefore, was useless as well as dangerous; and with the

Borgias to be useless was the worst recommendation a man could have. And so Alphonzo's death was resolved upon.

Meanwhile Lucrezia's husband, who had long been awake to the danger which he incurred by living near his terrible father-in-law, had returned to Naples. Dissimulation, however, by constant use had become so ingrained in the character of both Alexander and Cæsar, that there was no perceptible change in their relations with him, and he was beginning to forget his fears, when he received an invitation from the pope and his son to come to Rome and take part in a bull-fight after the Spanish fashion, with which they proposed to celebrate the duke's departure. In the precarious situation of the royal house of Naples it would have been impolitic for Alphonzo to afford Alexander the slightest pretext for a rupture; he was reluctant, therefore, to refuse without sufficient reason, and so betook himself to Rome. It was thought to be useless to consult Lucrezia in the matter, for on two or three occasions she had shown signs of an absurd attachment for her husband, and she was left undisturbed in her petty government of Spoleto.

Alphonzo was welcomed by the pope and the Duc de Valentinois with every indication of sincere friendship, and they gave him the suite of rooms he formerly occupied with Lucrezia in that wing of the Vatican called Torre-Nova.

Spacious lists were prepared on the Square of St. Peter's, and the streets leading into the square were barricaded. The neighboring houses afforded private boxes already made at their windows. The pope and his court were on the balcony of the Vatican.

The performance was begun by hired toreadors; when they had given a satisfactory exhibition of their strength

and dexterity, Alphonzo of Aragon and Cæsar Borgia descended into the arena, and to demonstrate the harmonious relations which existed between them it was agreed that the bull which pursued Cæsar should be slain by Alphonzo, and that Cæsar should deal with the one which pursued Alphonzo.

Cæsar, in the first place, remained alone on horseback in the arena while Alphonzo went out through a gateway cut in one of the barricades, and left it half open so that he could return when his presence became necessary. At the same time the bull was admitted from the opposite side, and was instantly assailed with a shower of darts and arrows, some of which contained powder which exploded, and irritated the bull to such a point that, after he had rolled on the ground in agony, he rose again in a frenzy of rage, and spying a man on horseback made a frantic rush at him. Thereupon, in that confined space, pursued by a nimble-footed and infuriated beast, Cæsar displayed the marvelous grace and dexterity which made him one of the finest horsemen of his time. Notwithstanding his great skill and address, however, he could not long have eluded, in such a narrow space, an adversary from whom he had no means of escape but flight, had not Alphonzo suddenly appeared, waving a red cloak in his left hand, while in his right he held a long, keen Aragonese sword.

It was high time, for the bull was but a few paces distant from Cæsar, and his peril seemed so imminent that a woman shrieked at one of the windows; but, at sight of a man on foot, the bull stopped short, and concluding that he could make shorter work of his new enemy than of the old, turned upon him, and after standing still for a moment, bellowing, raising clouds of dust with his hind feet, and lashing his sides with his tail, rushed upon

Alphonzo with blood-shot eyes, ploughing up the ground with his horns. Alphonzo calmly awaited the onslaught, and when he was within three feet leaped aside, aiming a blow at him as he passed with his sword, which was buried up to the hilt; the bull at once came to a stand-still, stood for an instant, tottering on his legs, then fell upon his knees with a hoarse bellow, and at last rolled over dead upon the very spot where he was struck.

Loud applause burst from all sides, the blow was delivered so skilfully and quickly. Cæsar remained on his horse and instead of interesting himself in what was going on about him, was seeking to discover the fair spectator who had given so pronounced an indication of her interest in him. His search was not fruitless; he recognized one of the maids of honor of Elizabeth, Duchess of Urbino, who was betrothed to Giovanni Caracciolo, captain general of the Republic of Venice.

It was now Alphonzo's turn to run and Cæsar's to fight; they exchanged parts, therefore, and while four mules with much ado were dragging off the body of the dead bull, and the valets and servants of his Holiness were bringing sand to cover up the spot of blood, Alphonzo mounted a superb Andalusian steed, of Arabian ancestry, swift as the wind which blew upon his mother in the Desert of Sahara. Cæsar, on the other hand, alighted and left the arena, to return when Alphonzo should be in the same dangerous plight from which he had just rescued him.

Another bull was then introduced, and driven frantic in the same way by pointed darts and burning arrows. Like the first, when he spied a man on horseback, he rushed upon him, and thereupon began a wonderful trial of speed, in which, so swiftly did they pass and repass, it was impossible to tell which it was, whether bull

or horse which was pursuing the other. But, after they had made the circuit of the arena five or six times, the bull began to gain upon the son of Arabia, fleet as he was, and one could distinguish between pursuer and pursued. An instant more, and there was only the length of a lance between them, when suddenly Cæsar Borgia appeared in his turn, armed with one of the long two-handed swords commonly used by the French.

As the bull, hot on the track of Don Alphonzo, passed in front of him, Cæsar, whirling his sword through the air like a flash of lightning, cut off his head, which fell to the ground, while his body carried on by the force of inertia, fell ten paces farther on. The blow was so entirely unexpected and was dealt with such marvelous dexterity, that it was greeted not with mere applause, but with frantic enthusiasm and frenzied cries. Cæsar meanwhile acted as if he had forgotten everything, even at the moment of his triumph, except the shriek called forth by his danger in the first encounter; he picked up the bull's head and handed it to one of his squires, ordering him to lay it at the feet of the fair Venetian who had demonstrated her sympathy for him so unmistakably.

This function had another purpose besides the giving each of the young men an opportunity to display his prowess; it was designed to prove to the common people that the best of good feeling reigned between them, since each had saved the other's life. Thenceforth, if any mishap should befall Cæsar no one would think of accusing Alphonzo of causing it; and in like manner no one would lay at Cæsar's door the responsibility for anything that might happen to Alphonzo.

There was to be a supper party at the Vatican: Alphonzo arrayed himself with great care, and about ten in the evening started to go from the wing in which he

was quartered to the part of the palace occupied by the pope. But the door between the two court-yards was fastened, and, knock as he would, no one came to open it. It then occurred to him that it would be a simple matter to go around through the Square of St. Peter's; so he went out unattended through a gate of the Vatican gardens, and walked through the dark streets leading to the stairway which led up to the square. But he had no sooner placed his foot in the first step than he was set upon by a party of armed men. He tried to draw his sword; but before it was out of his scabbard he received two blows from a halberd, one on the head and the other on the shoulder, a sword thrust on the side, and two cuts on the temple and the leg. He fell senseless to the ground; his assassins, believing him dead, ran hastily up the stairs, and found forty horsemen awaiting them, under whose escort they left the city unhindered, by the Portese Gate.

Alphonzo was discovered by passers by in a moribund condition, but not dead; some of them recognized him, and at once carried the news of the murder to the Vatican, while the others took him in their arms and carried him to his apartment in the Torre-Nova. The pope and Cæsar, who received the intelligence just as they were taking their places at the table, were apparently so overcome by it, that they left their guests and went immediately to Don Alphonzo's bedside, to make sure whether his wounds were or were not mortal. The next morning, in order to turn aside the suspicion which might have fallen upon them, they caused the arrest of Francesco Gazella, Alphonzo's maternal uncle, who accompanied his nephew to Rome. False witnesses convicted him of being the author of the murder, and his head was cut off.

But only half of the task was done; suspicion was turned aside to such an extent that no one would ever dare to accuse the real assassins; but Alphonzo was not dead, and by virtue of his vigorous constitution and the skill of his physicians, who took the pretended grief of the pope and his son seriously, and believed that the recovery of the patient would be agreeable to them, he was progressing favorably toward convalescence. At the same time the news arrived that Lucrezia, having heard of the attack upon her husband, proposed to come to Rome and nurse him herself. There was no time to be lost, so Cæsar sent for Michelotto.

"That same night," says Benchard, "Don Alphonzo, who declined to die of his wounds, was strangled in his bed."

The next day his obsequies took place, and if they were not on a scale of magnificence suited to his rank, they were at least respectable. Don Francesco Borgia, Archbishop of Cosenza, acted as chief mourner at St. Peter's, where the body was interred in the chapel of Santa Maria.

Lucrezia reached Rome the night after the funeral. She knew her father and brother too well to be the dupe of their pretended grief; and although Cæsar, immediately upon Don Alphonzo's demise, caused the arrest of his physicians and surgeons, as well as a poor devil of a hunchback who was his valet-de-chambre, she saw at once whence the blow came. And so, fearing that her own sorrow, which was genuine enough this time, might deprive her of her father's and brother's confidence, she withdrew to Nepi with her whole household, her whole court, and more than six hundred horsemen, there to pass her period of mourning.

This momentous family affair adjusted, and Lucrezia

once more a widow, and therefore ready to make herself useful in the pope's new political combinations, Cæsar Borgia remained at Rome only long enough to receive the ambassadors of France and Venice. But as their coming was somewhat delayed, and as the numerous fêtes recently given had created a vacuum in the pope's treasure chest, he employed the interval in creating twelve new cardinals. This step had a twofold result; it brought six hundred thousand ducats into the chest, each hat being valued at fifty thousand, and it gave the pope an absolutely certain majority in the Sacred College.

The ambassadors at last arrived. M. Villeneuve, the same who came to Rome once before in the name of the King of France to take Cæsar Borgia back with him, met on the road, as he was about to enter the city, a masked man who, without removing his mask, expressed his great delight at his arrival. It was Cæsar himself; not wishing to be recognized he left the ambassador after a short conversation, without having exposed his features. M. Villeneuve followed him into the city, and found at the Porta del Popolo the ambassadors of all the different powers, even those of Spain and Naples, whose sovereigns were not as yet, it is true, openly hostile to France, although relations between them were beginning to be decidedly strained.

The Spanish and Neapolitan ambassadors, fearful of compromising themselves, greeted their French colleague with the simple phrase: "welcome, Signor;" whereupon the master of ceremonies, surprised at such a curt greeting, asked them if they had nothing further to say. They answered no, and M. Villeneuve at once turned his back on them with the retort that those who had nothing to say required no reply. He then took his place between the Archbishop of Reggio, Governor of Rome, and the

Archbishop of Ragusa, and rode to the palace of the Holy Apostles which had been prepared for his reception.

A few days later Maria Georgi, ambassador extraordinary of the Venetian Republic, arrived at Rome in his turn. His mission was not only to deal with the ordinary relations between the two powers; he had it also in charge to bear to Alexander and Cæsar patents of nobility, and the records showing that their names had been inscribed in the Book of Gold, an honor which both had long been ambitious to obtain, less for the empty glory it would bring them than for the additional influence they might hope to reap from it.

The pope then proceeded to deliver the cardinal's hats to the recent purchasers thereof. These new princes of the church were Don Diego Mendoza, Archbishop of Seville; Giacomo, Archbishop of Oristagny, the pope's vicar-general; Tommaso, Archbishop of Strigonia; Pietro, Archbishop of Reggio, and Governor of Rome; Francesco Borgia, Archbishop of Cosenza, Treasurer-general; Giovanni, Archbishop of Salerno, Vice-chamberlain; Ludovico Borgia, Archbishop of Valencia, Secretary to his Holiness and brother of Giovanni Borgia, poisoned by Cæsar; Antonio, Bishop of Como; Giovanni-Batista Ferrara, Bishop of Modena; Amedée d'Albret, son of the King of Navarre and Cæsar's brother-in-law; and lastly Marco Cornaro, a Venetian of noble birth, in whose person the Holy Father reciprocated the honor conferred upon him by the most serene republic.

As there was nothing more to delay the departure of the Duc de Valentinois, he took just so much time as was necessary to negotiate a loan with a wealthy banker, Augustine Chigi, brother of Lorenzo Chigi, who met his death on the day of the pope's hairbreadth escape from

the falling chimney; then, with his treasure-chest well supplied, set out for Romagna, accompanied by Vitellozo Vitelli, Giovanni Paolo Baglione, and Giacomo di Santa-Croce, who were at this time his friends, but were later to be his victims.

Cæsar's first enterprise was directed against Pesaro a brotherly attention of which Giovanni Sforza realized the probable results; and instead of trying to defend his dominions by force of arms, or to obtain advantageous terms by negotiation, he besought his subjects to hold him in affectionate remembrance in the hope of better days to come, and fled into Dalmatia, not wishing to expose the fair land of which he had so long been master to the vengeance of an exasperated enemy. Malatesta, lord of Rimini followed his example, so that Cæsar took possession of both those places without striking a blow. Leaving a sufficient garrison in each of them he marched upon Faenza.

There, matters took a different turn. Faenza was then ruled by Astor Manfredi, a handsome and gallant youth of eighteen. He was abandoned by the Bentivogli his near kinsmen, and by the Venetians and Florentines, his allies, who did not dare to send him succor, because of the friendship of the King of France for Cæsar; but he resolved nevertheless, knowing the deep affection of his subjects for his family, to defend the place to the last extremity. And so, when he learned that the Duc de Valentinois was marching against him he assembled in all haste such of his vassals as were in condition to bear arms, and the few foreign troops who would consent to enter his service, and shut himself up with them in the town, after laying in an abundant supply of provisions and ammunition.

These preparations for defence disturbed Cæsar but

little. He had a magnificent army, made up of the best troops of France and Italy, and which numbered among its officers, aside from himself, Paolo and Guilio Orsino, Vitellozo Vitelli, and Paolo Baglione, who were the first captains of the time. Having carefully reconnoitered the place, therefore, he at once began siege operations by pitching his camp between the rivers Amona and Marziano and placing his artillery on the side of the town toward Forli, where the besieged had erected a strong earthwork.

After some few days of opening trenches, a practicable breach was made, and the Duc de Valentinois ordered an assault, himself setting the example to his men by leading the way. But, despite his rash courage, and that of the captains who accompanied him, Astor Manfredi made such an heroic defence that the besiegers were driven back with great loss, leaving in the moat Honorio Savello, one of their most gallant leaders.

Faenza, however, notwithstanding the courage and devotion of its defenders, could not long have held out against so formidable an army, if winter had not come to its aid. Unexpectedly overtaken by the rigors of that season without shelter for his troops and with no wood to build fires, the peasants having demolished the houses, and carted away the wood, Cæsar was obliged to raise the siege, and go into winter quarters in the neighboring towns, in order to be prepared for the return of spring. For he could not forgive a small town which had been long at peace, was governed by a child, and was entirely without help from abroad, for holding him thus at bay, and he had sworn to have his revenge. He divided his army into three parts, sent one to Immola, one to Forli, and fixed his own headquarters with the third at Cesena, which was suddenly transformed from a

third-rate town into a city of luxury and debauchery. Cæsar's mind was so active that he required to be unceasingly employed either in war or in dissipation; and when the war was necessarily interrupted, the fêtes began, as gorgeous and wanton as he knew how to make them; the days were passed in games and riding parties; the nights in dancing and debauchery; for the most beautiful women in all Romagna flocked to his camp, and formed a seraglio which the Sultan of Egypt or the Emperor of Constantinople might have envied him.

While the Duc de Valentinois was riding one day in the outskirts of the town, with the court of fawning noblemen and titled courtesans, who never left him, he encountered upon the Rimini road a cortege of such size as to indicate that it was in attendance upon some person of rank. He soon discovered that that person was a woman, and on drawing nearer recognized the same attendant of the Duchess of Urbino, who shrieked her sympathy when he was so near being gored by the infuriated bull. She was, as we then said, betrothed to Giovanni Caracciolo, the Venetian general. Her patroness and godmother, Elizabeth of Gonzaga, was now sending her, with a fitting retinue, to Venice, where the marriage was to be solemnized.

The young woman's exceeding beauty made an impression upon Cæsar at Rome: but meeting her thus, she seemed to him even more beautiful than before, and he determined on the instant to keep for himself this sweet flower of love, having more than once reproached himself for passing her by so heedlessly. He greeted her as an old acquaintance, and inquired if she did not propose to tarry some time at Cesena, but she replied that her coming was so impatiently awaited, that she was making long stages, and expected to lie at Forli

that night. This was all that Cæsar wanted to know: he summoned Michelotto, and said a few words to him in an undertone.

The party made but a very brief stay at Cesena, and went on again toward Forli, although the day was far advanced. They had made less than a league when a party of horsemen from Cesena overtook and surrounded them. Although greatly outnumbered, the soldiers of the escort essayed to defend their general's bride: but some of them were killed, and the others fled in terror. The young lady descended from her litter and tried to escape, but the leader seized her and placed her before him on his horse, ordered his men to return to Cesena without him, and galloped away across the fields and out of sight, just as the twilight was falling.

Caracciolo learned of this abduction from one of the fugitives, who insisted that he recognized the abductors as soldiers in the employ of the Duc de Valentinois. At first, he was so reluctant to believe anything so terrible, that he thought he could not have heard aright; but, being convinced at last, he stood for a moment without word or movement, as if turned to stone. But suddenly he roused himself from his stupor with a cry for vengeance, and rushed to the Ducal palace, where the doge and the Council of Ten were in session. He forced his way to their presence without being announced, just as they had themselves been advised of Cæsar's crime.

"Most Serene Signori," he cried, "I have come to take leave of you, being fully resolved to sacrifice in the cause of my own vengeance, the life which I believed I might devote to the service of the republic. I have been outraged in the noblest part of my being—my honor. My most precious treasure has been stolen from me—my promised bride. And he who has done this

thing is the most treacherous, the most impious, the most infamous of men—Valentinois! Be not offended, Signori, that I speak thus of a man who boasts that he is of your nobility and entitled to your protection. He is not, he lies! his dastardly deeds and his crimes make him unworthy of either distinction, as he is unworthy of the life which I will wrest from him with this sword. 'Tis true that such a man, sacrilegious by birth, a fratricide, a usurper of other people's property, an oppressor of the innocent, a highwayman, a man who violates all laws, even those of hospitality, which are held in respect among the least civilized peoples, a man who does violence in his own dominions to a maiden passing through, when she had the right to expect from him the respect due not to her sex and rank alone, but to the most serene republic, whose general I am, and which he insults in my person by dishonoring my bride; it is true, I say, that such a man deserves to die by some other hand than mine. But, as he whose duty it is to punish him, is a father as guilty as his son, instead of being an incorruptible judge, I will myself seek him out, and will sacrifice my life, not only to avenge my own wrongs and the blood of so many innocent ones, but to secure the welfare of the most serene republic, which he aspires and intends to grind beneath his heel after he has subjugated the other princes of Italy."

The doge and the senators, who, as we have seen were already aware of the occurrence which brought Caracciolo into their presence, listened to him with great interest and indignation; as he truly said, they were themselves outraged in the person of their general, and they all swore upon their honor that, if he would trust the affair to them instead of giving way to his wrath, which would inevitably be his ruin, his wife should be

restored to him without a single stain upon her bridal veil or his vengeance should be apportioned to the insult.

Thereupon, as a proof of the zeal with which they entered upon the matter, the august body at once despatched Ludovico Manenti, secretary of the Ten, to Immola, where the duke was said to be, to bear witness to the displeasure of the most serene republic on account of the outrage put upon its general. At the same time the doge and the Ten called upon the French ambassador to add his influence to theirs, and to go in person with Manenti to the Duc de Valentinois, and summon him, in the name of King Louis XII. to send the victim of the abduction to Venice on the instant.

The messengers went to Immola, where they found Cæsar. He listened to their demand with admirably feigned astonishment, denying all knowledge of or participation in the crime, and fully authorized Manenti and the French ambassador to hunt down the perpetrators, promising to investigate the matter thoroughly himself.

He spoke with such an appearance of perfect good faith, that the envoys were deceived for the moment and began a most minute investigation. They went to the spot where the abduction took place, and made searching inquiries. The people in the neighborhood found the dead and wounded lying on the highway; they saw a mounted man gallop by carrying a weeping woman across his saddle, and strike across the fields. A peasant returning from his work saw him appear and vanish like a shadow in the direction of an isolated house. An old woman said she saw him enter the house. But during the night the house disappeared as if by magic and the plow was driven over its site; so that no one could say what had become of her whom they sought, since neither the house itself, nor its occupants were to be found.

Manenti and the French ambassador returned to Venice, and related what the Duc de Valentinois said to them, what steps they took, and how their investigations led to no result. No one had the least doubt that Cæsar was the culprit, but no one could prove that he was. And so the serene republic, which could not afford to fall out with the pope, having a war with the Turks on its hands, forbade Caracciolo to take any measures to avenge himself, and the excitement over the abduction gradually died away until at last it ceased to be spoken of. Meanwhile the relaxations of the winter did not divert Cæsar from his designs upon Faenza. As soon as the returning spring permitted him to take the field, he marched against the town once more, camped in front of the castle, and having made a new breach, ordered a general assault, leading the way himself as before. But, notwithstanding his individual gallantry, well seconded as it was by his men, the assault was repulsed by Astor, who, at the head of his men, stood his ground at the breach, while the women hurled down stones and tree-trunks upon the besiegers from the top of the ramparts. After an hour's hand to hand struggle Cæsar was compelled to retire, leaving two thousand men in the trenches, among them Valentino Farnese, one of his bravest officers.

Realizing after this failure that assaults were as ineffectual as excommunication, Cæsar converted the siege into a blockade. All the roads leading to Faenza were obstructed and all lines of communication broken. As there had been several indications of rebellion at Cesena, he installed as governor there, a man whom he knew to have an inflexible will, one Ramiro d'Orco, with power of life and death over the people. Then he sat calmly down before Faenza, to wait until hunger should drive

the inhabitants forth from those walls which they defended with such desperate determination. At the expiration of a month, during which they underwent all the horrors of famine, they sent a flag of truce to Cæsar's camp to propose a capitulation. There was so much left for him to do in Romagna, that he was more amenable to reason than they dared to hope, and the town surrendered on condition that neither the persons nor property of the people should be molested, that Astor Manfredi should be free to go where he pleased and should enjoy the income of his patrimony wherever he might be.

These terms were faithfully observed so far as the inhabitants were concerned; but when Cæsar's eyes fell upon Astor, whom he did not know, he was seized with a strange passion for the handsome youth whose beauty was almost feminine in its quality. He kept him with him in his army, treating him with the respect due to a young prince, and appearing to entertain the greatest friendship for him. Then one day Astor disappeared, as Caracciolo's fiancé had done, and no one knew what had become of him. Cæsar himself seemed much disturbed, said that he had doubtless fled, and to encourage a belief in his flight sent couriers after him in all directions.

A year after these occurrences there were found in the Tiber, a short distance below the Castle of San Angelo, the bodies of a lovely young woman, with her hands tied behind her back, and a handsome youth, with the cord with which he had been strangled still about his neck. The young woman was Caracciolo's fiancé, and the youth was Astor.

Both had ministered to Cæsar's pleasures during the year, and when at last he grew weary of them he had them thrown into the Tiber.

The taking of Faenza procured for Cæsar the title of Duke of Romagna, which was in the first place conferred upon him in full consistory, and was afterward ratified by the King of Hungary, the Republic of Venice, and the Kings of Castile and Portugal. The news of the ratification arrived at Rome on the eve of the day when the people were accustomed to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the Eternal City. This festival, which dated back to the time of Pomponius Lætus, was observed with more pomp than ever on account of the good fortune which seemed to follow the pope and his family. Guns were fired all day as a token of the public delight; in the evening there were illuminations and fireworks; and the Prince of Squillace, with the most distinguished members of the Roman nobility, spent the greater part of the night roaming through the streets with torches in their hands, shouting: "Long live Alexander! Long live Cæsar! Long live the Borgias! Long live the Orsini! Long live the Duke of Romagna!"

Meanwhile Cæsar's ambition soared higher and higher with his successes. He was no sooner master of Faenza than he cast his eyes upon Bologna, incited thereto by the Marescotti, long time enemies of the Bentivogli. But Giovanni di Bentivoglio, whose ancestors had ruled over the city from time immemorial, had taken warning from the fate of his neighbors, and made every preparation for a sturdy resistance, besides placing himself under the protection of France. So that, as soon as he learned that Cæsar was marching at the head of his army toward the Bolognese frontier, he sent a courier to Louis XII. to demand the fulfillment of his promise. Louis responded to the appeal with his customary good faith, and when Cæsar arrived before Bologna, he received an intimation from the King of France that he had best

not attempt to carry out any design upon the well-being of his ally. But Cæsar was not the man to take so much trouble for nothing, and so he proposed certain conditions on which he would consent to retire, and Bentivoglio agreed to them, only too happy to be quit of him at that price. He agreed to cede Castel Bolognese, a fortress between Immola and Faenza, to pay a tribute of nine thousand ducats, and to furnish him with a hundred men-at-arms and two thousand infantry. In exchange for these concessions Cæsar confided to him that he was indebted to the suggestions of the Marescotti for his visit. He then set out for Tuscany, reinforced by the contingent furnished by his new ally.

He was hardly out of sight when Bentivoglio ordered all the gates of Bologna to be closed, and directed his son Hermes to kill Agamemnon Marescotti, the head of the family, with his own hand, while he himself superintended the slaughter of thirty-four of his brothers, sons and daughters and nephews, and two hundred of their kindred and friends. The bloody work was done by the youth of the noblest families of Bologna, whom Bentivoglio compelled to stain their hands with murder, so that their fear of reprisals might keep them faithful to him.

Cæsar's designs upon Florence were hardly a mystery now. In the month of January he sent Regnier della Lassetta and Pietro di Gamba-Corti to Pisa with some twelve hundred men, and as soon as the conquest of Romagna was finished Oliverotto da Fermo was dispatched to the same city with additional forces. As we have just seen he had reinforced the army under his personal leadership with a hundred men-at-arms and two thousand foot, and he was joined by Vitellozo Vitelli, lord of Città di Castello, and by the Orsini, who brought

him two or three thousand more men; so that he had under his command, beside the troops sent to Pisa seven hundred men-at-arms and five thousand foot.

Notwithstanding this formidable host he entered Tuscany, protesting that his intentions were entirely peaceful, and that he desired nothing more than to pass over the territory of the republic on his way to Rome; at the same time he offered to pay cash for such supplies as his army needed. But when he had passed through the defiles of the mountains and reached Barberino, feeling that Florence was in his power, and that its approaches could not be successfully defended against him, he put a price upon his friendliness, and began to talk about imposing conditions instead of submitting to them. His conditions were that Pietro dei Medici, the kinsman and ally of the Orsini, should be restored to his former power; that six citizens, to be designated by Vitellozo, should be put in his hands, in order that the death of Paolo Vitelli, whom the Florentines unjustly executed, might be expiated by the deaths of these six; that the seignorial body should bind themselves to furnish no assistance to the lord of Piombino whom he proposed to dispossess of his domain without loss of time; and lastly, that the republic should take him into its service for such pay as his deserts demanded.

But just as Cæsar reached this point in his negotiations with Florence, he was called upon by Louis XII. to make ready to accompany him with his army, as was agreed between them, to the conquest of Naples, which he was now in a position to undertake. Cæsar did not dare to break his word to so powerful an ally; he sent word to him, therefore, that he was at his service, and as the Florentines did not know that he was obliged to leave Tuscany, he induced them to purchase his

withdrawal by the promise of a yearly payment of thirty-six thousand ducats, in exchange for which he agreed to keep three hundred men-at-arms always ready to go to the assistance of the republic at the first summons, whatever the occasion.

Hurried as he was, Cæsar hoped to find time in passing to make himself master of the territory of Piombino, and to obtain possession of its capital by a well-directed, vigorous *coup-de-main*. Consequently he marched into the dominions of Giacomo IV. of Appiano; but he found that he had anticipated him by laying waste his own fields, burning the crops, cutting down the trees, tearing up the vines, and choking up the few springs of drinkable water. This did not prevent Cæsar from gaining possession in a few days of Severeto Scarlino, the island of Elba and Pianosa: but he was forced to a stand at the castle, which offered a vigorous resistance. At this time the French army was in full march toward Rome, and Cæsar, on the twenty-seventh of July, received a second order to join it; he set out the next morning, leaving Vitellozo and Baglione to carry on the siege in his absence.

Louis XII. was advancing upon Naples, not with the impulsive recklessness of Charles VII., but with the prudence and circumspection which were characteristic of him. In addition to his alliance with Florence and Rome he had signed a secret treaty with Ferdinand the Catholic, who claimed to have, through the family of Durazzo, as well-defined a right to the Kingdom of Naples, as Louis had through the House of Anjou. By this secret treaty the two kings divided up their conquest in advance; Louis XII. was to have Naples itself with Laboni and the Abruzzi, and the title of King of Naples and Jerusalem; Ferdinand was to have Puglia and

Calabria, with the title of duke of those provinces. Both were to receive the requisite investiture from the pope, and to hold of him.

This partition had the better chance of being carried out, in that Frederic believing Ferdinand still to be his generous and faithful friend, would surely open his gates to him, and learn when it was too late that he had admitted his enemies and masters into his strong places instead of allies. All this was not over-loyal, perhaps on the part of the king who had so long coveted and finally received the surname of Catholic; but that mattered little to Louis XII., who shared the advantages of the perfidy, without sharing the perfidy itself.

The French army, reinforced by Cæsar and his troops, consisted of a thousand lances, four thousand Swiss, and six thousand Gascons and adventurers. It was to be supported by a fleet under Philip of Rabenstein consisting of sixteen Breton and Provencal war-vessels, and three Genoese caracks, with sixty-five hundred men all told.

To oppose this imposing array, the King of Naples had but seven hundred men-at-arms, six hundred light horse, and six thousand foot, all under the command of the Colonnas, whom he took into his service when the pope drove them out of the States of the Church. He placed great reliance, however, upon Gonzalvo of Cordova, who was to join him at Gaëta, and to whom, in his confidence, he threw open the gates of all the fortresses in Calabria.

But Frederic's reliance upon his faithless ally was not of long duration. On their arrival at Rome the French and Spanish ambassadors exhibited to the pope the treaty signed at Grenada, on November 11, 1500, between Louis XII. and Ferdinand the Catholic, and

which had not before transpired. Alexander, with keen prevision of what was to happen, had broken all the ties which bound him to the House of Aragon, by the death of Alphonzo. At the outset, however, he made some objections, until it was pointed out to him that this new arrangement had been made for the sole purpose of affording the Christian princes greater facilities for attacking the Ottoman Empire; to such an argument all the pope's scruples were bound to yield, and on June 25th he decided to convoke a consistory which declared Frederic to be no longer King of Naples.

Frederic learned at one and the same time of the arrival of the French army at Rome, the treason of Ferdinand, and the sentence of deposition pronounced by Alexander; he realized, of course, that it was all over with him, but he did not choose to let it be said that he had abandoned his kingdom without even trying to defend it. He therefore sent Fabricio Colonna and Ranucio de Marciano, his two new generals, to delay the French before Capua, with three hundred men-at-arms, a few light horse and three thousand foot; he himself occupied Aversa with another portion of his army, while Prosper Colonna with the remainder was entrusted with the defence of Naples, and the expulsion of the Spaniards from Calabria.

These dispositions were hardly completed when D'Aubigny crossed the Voltorno, and laid siege to Capua on both sides of the river. As soon as their tents were pitched under the ramparts the French placed their batteries in position, and opened fire, to the intense alarm of the poor besieged, who were almost all strangers to the city, having hurried thither from all sides in the hope of finding shelter behind its walls. And so it happened that as soon as the French made one

assault, although it was bravely repulsed by Fabricio Colonna, the feeling of terror throughout the city was so general, and so utterly blind, that every one wished to throw open the gates at once, and it was with greatest difficulty that Colonna made the panic-stricken mob understand that they ought at least to profit by the check the besiegers had met with to the extent of obtaining an honorable capitulation.

Having at last convinced them he sent a flag of truce to D'Aubigny, and a conference was fixed for the second day thereafter, at which the terms of surrender should be discussed.

But such an arrangement did not tally with the designs of Cæsar Borgia. He had remained behind to confer with the pope, and joined the French army with part of his troops on the very day that the conference was agreed upon. A capitulation on any terms would rob him of part of the satisfaction, to say nothing of the booty, which he promised himself in taking by assault so wealthy and populous a city as Capua. So he entered into negotiation on his own account with an officer in charge of the defences at one of the gates, secret, golden negotiations, which are always more quickly made and more efficacious than the other sort. The result was that, while Fabricio Colonna was discussing the terms of capitulation with the French generals in a bastion in the outer works, they suddenly began to hear shrieks of distress:—Cæsar Borgia, without advising any one of his purpose, had entered the city, accompanied by his faithful army from Romagna, and was slaughtering the garrison, who had relaxed their vigilance because they knew that the capitulation was ready to be signed. The French, seeing that the city was half taken, rushed upon the gates so impetuously that the besieged did not even

try to defend them, and forced their way in at three different points. After that, there was no hope of checking the butchery and pillage that had already begun: the work of destruction must go on to the end. In vain did Fabricio Colonna, Ranucio di Marciano and Don Ugo di Cardona try to hold their ground against French and Spaniards with a handful of men whom they had succeeded in getting together. Colonna and Don Ugo were taken prisoners by the French, and Ranucio, wounded by a cross-bow bolt, fell into the hands of the Duke of Romagna. Seven thousand of the inhabitants were massacred in the streets, among them the traitor who opened the gate: the churches were pillaged; the convent doors were forced and many of the saintly nuns threw themselves into the wells and into the river to escape the brutal soldiery. Three hundred women of the noblest families fled for refuge to a tower; Cæsar burst open the doors, selected forty of the fairest for himself, and turned over the rest to his army.

The pillage lasted three days. Capua fallen, Frederic saw that it was useless for him to attempt to make any further defence. He shut himself up in Castel-Nuovo, and gave Gaëta and Naples permission to treat with the conqueror. Gaëta saved itself from pillage by the payment of sixty thousand ducats, and Naples by the surrender of the castle which was put into D'Aubigny's hands by Frederic himself, on condition that he should be permitted to take his money, jewels and household goods to the island of Ischia, and remain there with his family unmolested for six months. The conditions were faithfully adhered to on both sides; D'Aubigny entered Naples, and Frederic withdrew to Ischia.

Thus fell for the last time, and "great was the fall thereof," this branch of the House of Aragon which

had reigned in Naples for sixty-five years. Frederic, its head, asked and obtained a safe-conduct to France, where Louis XII. bestowed upon him the Duchy of Anjou and a pension of thirty thousand ducats on condition that he should not leave the kingdom, and he died there on September 9, 1504. His eldest son, Don Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria, made his way into Spain, where he was allowed to marry twice, but in each case a woman who was known beforehand to be barren. He died in 1550.

Alphonzo, the second son, who went into France with his father, died by poison, so it was said, at Grenoble at the age of twenty-two: Cæsar, the third son, died at Ferrara before he completed his eighteenth year.

Charlotte, Frederic's daughter, married in France, Nicolas Comte de Laval, Governor and Admiral of Bretagne; one daughter was born of this marriage, Anne de Laval, who married François de la Trémouille, and it was through her that the family of La Trémouille acquired the rights which it afterwards enforced to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

The surrender of Naples restored Cæsar's freedom of action; he left the French army with renewed assurances from its leader of the friendship of the King of France, and returned to the siege of Piombino which he had been forced to abandon. In the meantime Pope Alexander was paying a visit to his son's conquests, and making the tour of Romagna accompanied by Lucrezia, who was at last consoled for her husband's death, and had never been so high in favor with his Holiness: on their return to Rome she occupied an apartment in her father's suite.

There resulted from this recrudescence of pontifical affection two bulls, erecting the towns of Nepi and

Sermonetta into Duchies. One of them was given to Giovanni Borgia, one of the pope's children by some other mistress than Vanozza or Guilia Farnese, and the other to Don Rodrigo, of Aragon, son of Lucrezia and Alphonzo. The Colonna estates went with the titles by way of appanage.

But Alexander was dreaming of a new means of adding to the fortunes of himself and his family—the marriage, namely, of Lucrezia with Don Alphonzo, of Este, son of Hercules, Duke of Ferrara; the project had the advantage that it was looked upon favorably by Louis XII.

His Holiness seemed to have struck a vein of good luck, for he learned on the same day that Piombino had surrendered to the Duke of Romagna, and that Duke Hercules had given his word to the King of France.

Both pieces of news gave the greatest satisfaction to Alexander, but in point of real importance there was no comparison between them. The news that Madame Lucrezia was to wed the heir-presumptive to the Duchy of Ferrara was received by him with a frantic joy which smacked a little of the *parvenu*. The Duke of Romagna was requested to return to Rome to share in the family rejoicings, and on the day when public announcement of the betrothal was made the governor of the Castle of San Angelo was ordered to fire a gun every fifteen minutes from noon to midnight. At two o'clock, Lucrezia, in the appropriate garb of a fiancé, accompanied by her brothers, the Duke of Romagna and the Prince of Squillace, left the Vatican, attended by all the nobility of Rome, and went to the Church of the Madonna del Popolo, where the Duke of Gandia, and Cardinal Giovanni Borgia were buried, to return thanks for the latest dispensation of Providence in favor of their family. In

the evening, with the same escort made even more brilliant by the glare of torches, and the gorgeous illuminations, she made the circuit of the city amid cries of: "Long live Pope Alexander! Long live the Duchess of Ferrara!" uttered by heralds arrayed in cloth of gold.

On the following day the announcement was made throughout the city that there would be races for women from the Castle of San Angelo to the Square of St. Peter's; that on one day there would be a bull fight after the Spanish fashion; and that from the current month of October until the first day of Lent masquerades would be permitted in the streets of Rome.

Such were the amusements provided for the outside public; the programme of the entertainments enjoyed by those within the Vatican was not given to the public. If we may believe Burchard, who was an eye-witness, the following is a sample of their character.

"On the last Sunday in October fifty courtesans supped in the apartments of the Duc de Valentinois at the papal palace, and after supper danced with the squires and servants, at first with their clothes on, and later without them. After a while the table was removed, a number of candlesticks were symmetrically arranged on the floor, and quantities of chestnuts thrown among them, which these fifty women picked up with their teeth, walking about on all fours among the lighted candles. The pope, the Duc de Valentinois and his sister Lucrezia looked on at this spectacle from a gallery, and warmly applauded the most skillful and most active among them, who received as prizes, embroidered garters, velvet boots and caps made of cloth of gold and lace. Then they passed to amusements of a different sort, and ——."

We humbly ask pardon of our readers, especially

those of the gentler sex; but although we succeeded in finding words to describe the first part of the spectacle, we have sought in vain for any that we could venture to commit to paper in describing the second part; we will say simply this—that, there were prizes for obscenity and beastliness as well as for dexterity.

A few days after this extraordinary performance, which recalls so vividly the day of Tiberius, Nero and Heliogabalus, Lucrezia, attired in a gown of gold brocade, the train of which was borne by young women dressed in white and crowned with roses, came forth from her own palace, attended by the most aristocratic cavaliers, and the loveliest women in Rome, and walked to the Vatican to the music of trumpets and clarions, through streets which were spread with carpet in her honor. The pope was awaiting her in the Pauline hall with the Duke of Romagna, Don Ferdinand, acting as proxy for Duke Alphonzo of Este, and the Cardinal of Este, his cousin.

The pope took his seat at one side of the table while the envoys from Ferrara remained standing on the other side. Madame Lucrezia walked towards them and Don Ferdinand placed the wedding ring on her finger. When this was done the Cardinal of Este drew near and presented the bride with four superb rings, made of different precious stones in beautiful settings; then they placed a richly inlaid ivory casket upon the table, and the cardinal took from it a quantity of jewels, chains and necklaces, pearls and diamonds, the workmanship being no less beautiful than the materials, and begged Lucrezia to accept them as a makeshift, until her husband should in person offer her some which would be more worthy of her.

Lucrezia accepted the gifts with every indication of

unstinted delight; then she withdrew, leaning on the pope's arm, to an adjoining room; she was followed by the female portion of her suite, and Cæsar was left to do the honors of the Vatican to the men. In the evening the guests met again, and while a magnificent display of fireworks was taking place on the Square of St. Paul's, they danced half the night through.

When the ceremony of the betrothal was at an end, the pope and the Duke of Romagna busied themselves with preparations for the bride's departure. The pope desired that the journey should be performed with the utmost pomp and magnificence, and to that end added to his daughter's retinue, consisting of her two brothers-in-law, and the gentlemen who had come to Rome with them, the whole Roman Senate, and those of the great nobles whose wealth enabled them to make the most gorgeous display in the matter of clothing and livery. Among this brilliant train were Oliviero and Ramiro Mattei, sons of Pietro Mattei, Chancellor of the city, and a daughter of the pope by some obscure mistress. His Holiness also appointed in consistory Francesco Borgia, Cardinal of Cosenza, legate *a latere*, to escort his daughter to the frontier of the States of the Church.

The Duke of Romagna, to do his part toward attaining the desired result, sent messengers to all the cities of Romagna to give orders that Lucrezia should be received in each one of them as if she were its sovereign mistress; and preparations on a grand scale were at once inaugurated. But the messengers reported that they were much afraid there might be some murmuring at Cesena, where, as the reader will remember, Cæsar had left Ramiro d'Orco as governor, with full powers to put down symptoms of insubordination. Ramiro d'Orco did his work so thoroughly that there was nothing more to be feared

in the way of an uprising, for a sixth of the inhabitants perished on the scaffold. But the natural result of such a state of things was that the city could hardly be expected to indulge in such fervid expressions of delight as were looked for from Immola, Faenza and Pesaro.

The Duke of Romagna extricated himself from this dilemma with the promptness and certainty which were characteristic of him. One morning the people of Cesena, when they woke from their slumbers, found a scaffold erected on the public square, and on the scaffold was a man's body cut in four pieces, and surmounted by the head stuck on the end of a pike.

The man was Ramiro d'Orco.

No one ever knew by what hands the scaffold was erected, nor by whom the terrible deed was done. The Republic of Florence interrogated Machiavelli, its ambassador at Cesena, as to his opinion of the affair and received the following reply:

"Magnificent Signori:

"I can tell you nothing concerning the execution of Ramiro d'Orco, save this—that Cæsar Borgia is the most accomplished of all princes in the matter of making and unmaking men according to their deserts.

"NICOLO MACHIAVELLI."

Cæsar made no mistake as to the probable effect of this step; the Duchess of Ferrara's reception in all the cities which lay in her route left nothing to be desired; especially was this true of the city of Cesena.

While Lucrezia was on her way to Ferrara to join her fourth husband, Alexander and the Duke of Romagna determined to make a tour through their latest conquest, the Duchy of Piombino. The ostensible purpose of

their journey was that Cæsar's new subjects might take an oath of allegiance to him, but their real object was to establish an arsenal in Appiano's capital, within reach of Tuscany, the conquest of which had never been seriously abandoned by the pope or his son.

They set sail from the port of Corneto on a fleet of six galleys, accompanied by a great number of cardinals and prelates, and arrived the same evening at Piombino. The papal court remained there some days, partly to give time for the duke to be acknowledged as their lord by the people, and partly to take part in certain ecclesiastical functions, of which the principal one was a solemn service of state on the third Sunday in Lent, at which the Cardinal of Cosenza said mass, in presence of the pope and all the cardinals.

These solemn functions were succeeded by the accustomed forms of dissipation; the pope sent for the loveliest damsels in the city, and ordered them to perform their national dances before him.

The dances were followed by banquets of unheard of splendor, where the pope made no scruple about eating flesh in everybody's sight, although it was the Lenten season. The whole performance, however, had no other purpose than to put a quantity of money in circulation, and insure the popularity of Cæsar Borgia, while heaping dust upon the memory of poor Appiano.

From Piombino the pope and his son went to the island of Elba, where they remained only long enough to visit the old fortifications and give orders for new to be built.

At last the illustrious voyagers took ship to return to Rome; but they were barely at sea when the weather took an unfavorable turn, and as the pope would not consent to return to Porto-Ferrajo, they remained five

days upon the galleys, although they were provisioned for but two. During the last three days the pope had nothing to eat but a few fried fish which were caught with much difficulty on account of the heavy weather. At last they came in sight of Corneto, and there the Duke of Romagna who was not on board the pope's galley, seeing that he could not hope to make the land in his own, took a small boat, and was rowed ashore. The pope was fain to keep on toward Pontercole, which place he reached at last after being exposed to the full fury of a storm of such violence that all his shipmates were on the verge of despair, either from sea-sickness or fear of death. The pope alone did not lose his self-possession for a single instant, or exhibit one symptom of alarm; throughout the storm he remained on deck, sitting in his arm-chair, calling upon the name of Jesus, and making the sign of the cross.

At last his galley entered the harbor of Pontercole; there he went ashore, and having sent to Corneto for horses, joined his son who was awaiting him there. They then returned to Rome by easy stages through Cività-Vecchia and Palo, and reached the Eternal City after an absence of a month.

Cardinal d'Albret arrived at about the same time in quest of his baretta; he was accompanied by the two infants of Navarre, who were received not only with the honors suited to their rank, but as brothers-in-law, to whom Cæsar was intensely anxious to show how highly he valued their alliance.

The turn had now come for Cæsar to resume his career of conquest. On the first of May of the previous year the pope had pronounced, in consistory, sentence of deposition against Giulio-Cesare di Varano, whereby, as a penalty for the murder of his brother Rudolph,

and for affording shelter to the pope's enemies he was dispossessed of his fief of Camerino, which reverted to the apostolic chamber. Cæsar now set out from Rome to put the sentence in execution. When he reached the frontiers of Perouse, which belonged to his lieutenant Giovanni-Paolo Baglione, he sent Olivetto da Fermo and Gravina Orsino to lay waste the March of Camerino, and at the same time called upon Guido d'Ubaldo of Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, to loan him troops and artillery to assist in the undertaking. The unfortunate Duke of Urbino, being on the best of terms with the pope, and having no reason to distrust Cæsar, did not dare to refuse. But on the very same day that his troops marched to Camerino, Cæsar's troops marched into the Duchy of Urbino, and took possession of Cagli, one of the four cities comprised therein. The duke realized what fate awaited him if he should attempt to resist, and made his escape in the garb of a peasant; and within a week Cæsar was master of the entire duchy except the fortresses of Maiolo and San-Leo.

He then turned his attention once more to Camerino, which was still holding out, the garrison and people taking heart from the presence of Giulio-Cesare di Varano, and his two sons, Venantio and Annibalis the eldest son, Giovanni-Maria, was at Venice on a mission for his father.

Cæsar's appearance led to negotiations between besiegers and besieged. Terms of capitulation were arranged, whereby Varano agreed to surrender the city on condition that he and his sons were allowed to take their departure without molestation, and carry their household goods, treasure and servants with them. This arrangement by no means accorded with Cæsar's views; and so he took advantage of the relaxation of vigilance on the

part of the garrison, which was a natural result of the capitulation, and surprised the city during the night preceding the day on which it was to be surrendered. He seized the persons of Varano and his two sons, who were strangled soon after, the father at Pergola and the sons at Pesaro, by Don Michele Correglia. Although the former bravo had risen to the rank of captain, he occasionally resumed the practice of his early profession.

Meanwhile Vitellozo Vitelli, who had assumed the title of General of the Church, and had eight hundred men-at-arms and three thousand foot under his orders, was following out the scheme of invasion embraced in Cæsar's secret and verbal instructions to him, the purpose of which was to surround Florence with a network of steel and put her in a position from which she would some day find it impossible to extricate herself. A worthy pupil of his master, under whose tuition he had learned to use the cunning of the fox or the strength of the lion as occasion required, he had opened negotiations with certain young noblemen of Arezzo looking to the surrender of that town to him. The conspiracy was discovered by Giulielmo dei Pazzi, commissioner of the Florentine Republic, who caused two of the conspirators to be arrested. But the others, who were much more numerous than he supposed, at once scattered through the city, calling the people to arms, and the whole republican faction, who thought they could see in any sort of an overturn, a hope of shaking off the yoke of Florence, joined them, freed the two prisoners, and seized the person of Giulielmo. They then proclaimed the re-establishment of the old constitution, and besieged the citadel, whither Cosmo dei Pazzi, Bishop of Arezzo, Giulielmo's son, had fled.

Finding that his stronghold was invested on every

side, he dispatched a messenger to Florence in hot haste for assistance.

Unfortunately for the cardinal, the troops of Vitellozo Vitelli were nearer to the besiegers than those of the magnificent republic were to the besieged, who, witnessed in dismay the arrival of the enemy's whole army, instead of reinforcements for themselves. This army was commanded by Vitellozo, Baglione, and Fabio Orsino, with whom were the two Medici, who were always ready to run to any point where a league was being formed against Florence, and to return on any conditions Borgia might choose to exact, to the city which had driven them from its gates.

On the following day the besiegers were further reinforced with men and money sent by Pandolfo Petrucci, and on the eighteenth of June, no word having been received from Florence, the citadel of Arezzo was obliged to surrender.

Vitellozo left the town in the hands of his inhabitants, put Fabio Orsino in the citadel with a thousand men, and, taking advantage of the universal terror inspired by the fall of Urbino, Camerino and Arezzo in such rapid succession, he marched upon Monte San-Severino, Castiglione-Aretino, Cortona and the other towns in the valley of Chiana, which surrendered one after another, almost without a blow. Thus he arrived within ten or twelve leagues of Florence, and sent word to Cæsar to that effect, not daring to make any movement against the city itself on his own responsibility. Cæsar deemed it a fitting time to strike the blow he had so many times postponed, and at once set out to be himself, the bearer of his reply to his faithful lieutenants.

But the Florentines, although they sent no reinforcements to the relief of Arezzo, made a request for some

for themselves from Chaumont d'Amboise, Governor of the Milanais under Louis XII. They pointed out to him not only that their immediate danger was great, but that Cæsar's ambition soared so high, that, after he had made himself master of the petty principalities, and then of the States of the second rank, his overweening vanity might lead him to the point of attacking the King of France himself. Inasmuch as the news from Naples was far from reassuring, grave dissensions having arisen between the Comte d'Armagnac and Gonzalvo of Cordova, Louis might at any time find that he had need of Florence, his tried and ever faithful friend; so he determined to arrest Cæsar's progress. He dispatched imperative orders to him not to go a step farther, and put Captain Imbaut in the field with four hundred lances to see that his orders were obeyed.

Cæsar received on the frontiers of Tuscany a copy of the treaty between the republic and the King of France, whereby the latter bound himself to defend his ally against attack from any source. He also received Louis' formal order to him to go no farther, and learned at the same time that, in addition to Captain Imbaut's four hundred lances which were on the way to Florence, Louis XII., on arriving at Asti, at once hurried Louis de la Trémouille off to Parma with two hundred men-at-arms, three thousand Swiss and a considerable train of artillery. These two movements combined seemed to indicate an attitude of hostility to him; so he wheeled about with his customary adroitness, and taking advantage of the fact that he had given none of his lieutenants any other than verbal orders, wrote Vitellozo a crushing letter, in which he reproached him bitterly for compromising him to serve his private purposes, and ordered him to restore to the Florentines at once, the cities and

fortresses he had taken from them, threatening, if he hesitated an instant to march upon him in person and wrest them from him.

This letter written and dispatched, Cæsar set out at once for Milan, where Louis XII. then was, carrying to him, as proof that he had been calumniated, intelligence of the evacuation of the conquered cities. He also had it in charge from the pope to renew for eighteen months the title of legate *a latere* to the French court, borne by the Cardinal d'Amboise, the friend rather than the minister of Louis XII. Thanks to this public proof of his innocence, and the secret influence of Amboise, Cæsar soon made his peace with the King of France.

But this was not all. It was the peculiar characteristic of Cæsar's genius that he always succeeded in emerging greater than ever by virtue of some new combination from every catastrophe that threatened to overwhelm him; and so he at once calculated the advantage he might reap from the alleged disobedience of his lieutenants. More than once before this he had been somewhat disturbed by the growth of their power, and had cast a covetous eye upon the cities belonging to them, and he thought perhaps the hour had now come to wipe them off the face of the earth, and seek, in the invasion of their dominions, some recompense for this Florence which continually eluded him just as he felt sure that he had her in his clutches.

Doubtless it was an annoying thing for him to see these cities and strong places flying other banners than his own in the midst of that lovely Romagna which he proposed making into a kingdom for himself. Vitellozo was the proprietor of Citta di Castello, Bentivoglio of Bologna, Giovanni-Paolo Baglioni of Perouse; Oliverotto had recently seized Fermo, and Pandolfo Petrucci

was lord of Sienna. It was high time that all these should come under his undisputed sway: his lieutenants, like Alexander's, were becoming too powerful, and he must needs inherit betimes from them to make sure that they did not inherit from him. He obtained three hundred lances from Louis XII. to be used against them.

Vitellozo Vitelli understood from the mere perusal of Cæsar's letter that in intention at least he was already sacrificed to his fear of the King of France. But he was not a man to be victimized so for a mere error of judgment, he was a veritable Romagnese buffalo, one of those who stands his ground with lowered horns against the sacrificial knife; and then, too, the fate of the Varani and Manfredi was fresh in his mind, and, death for death, he much preferred to die with arms in his hand.

He assembled at Maggione those whose lives and dominions were threatened by this latest sudden change in Cæsar's policy. There were Paolo Orsino, Giovanni-Paolo Baglioni, Hermes Bentivoglio, representing his father Giovanni, Antonio Venafro, envoy of Pandolfo Petrucci, Olivoretto da Fermo, and the Duke of Urbino. The first five had everything to lose, and the last had already lost everything.

A league was formed, whereby they all bound themselves to resist Cæsar, whether he tried to overthrow them one by one, or attacked them all together.

The Duke of Romagna learned of this league by its first result. The Duke of Urbino who was adored by his subjects, made his appearance with a handful of soldiers before the fortress of San-Leo, which at once surrendered to him, and in less than a week, other cities and fortresses having followed its example, the whole duchy was once more in the power of the duke.

At the same time each of the confederates openly proclaimed himself in revolt against the common enemy, and assumed an attitude of hostility.

The duke was at Immola almost without soldiers, waiting for those to be sent him from the French army. If Bentivoglio, who was in possession of one part of that region, and the Duke of Urbino, who had just reconquered another part, had marched against him, it is probable that they would either have taken him, or would have forced him to fly, and leave Romagna; especially as the two men upon whom he relied, Don Ugo di Cardona, who entered his service after the fall of Capua, and Michelotto were for the moment separated from him, through a misunderstanding of his orders. He ordered them to fall back upon Rimini, and to bring him the two hundred light horse and five hundred foot whom they commanded: but they failed to realize the urgency of the situation, and just as they were making an attempt to carry Pergola and Fossombrune by surprise, they were surrounded by Orsino, Gravina and Vitellozo.

Ugo di Cardona and Michelotto defended themselves like lions, but despite their heroic efforts their little band was cut in pieces. Ugo di Cardona was made prisoner and Michelotto escaped a similar fate only by lying among the dead: after nightfall, he made his escape to Fano.

Notwithstanding this success, and although he was almost defenceless at Immola, the confederates dared not attack Cæsar, whether because of the fear inspired by his personality, or because they respected in him the friend of the King of France. They contented themselves therefore with seizing the towns and fortresses in the neighborhood. Vitellozo took the fortresses of Fossombrune, Urbino, Cagli and Aggobbio; Orsino and

Gravina recaptured Fano, and the whole of that province; and Giovanni Maria di Varano, who had escaped the fate of the rest of his family because he was absent at Venice, re-entered Camerino, borne aloft in triumph by his people.

All these threatening conditions did not destroy Cæsar's confidence in his own good fortune, and while on the one hand he was hurrying on the coming of the French troops, and mustering into his service all the petty nobles, who were known as "*broken lances*," because they roamed about the country with only five or six horsemen, letting out the swords to any one who had need of them, on the other hand, he entered into negotiations with his enemies, feeling sure that if he could once induce them to consent to a conference they were lost. It is the truth that Cæsar had received from heaven the fatal gifts of a smooth tongue and great powers of persuasion; so that, however well aware one might be of his duplicity, it seemed to be impossible to resist, not his eloquence but the air of good natured frankness and *bonhomie*, which he knew so well how to assume, and which won the admiration of Machiavelli, who was taken in by it more than once himself, although he was the most subtle of politicians.

In order to induce Paolo Orsino to meet him for purposes of negotiation at Immola, he sent Cardinal Borgia to the confederates as a hostage: Paolo's hesitation vanished and he arrived at Immola on the twenty-fifth of October, 1502.

The duke welcomed him as one would welcome an old friend, from whom one has been estranged for a few days by some trifling temporary disagreement. He admitted with engaging frankness that all the fault was undoubtedly on his side, since he had succeeded in alienating

the good-will of men who were such loyal gentlemen and such gallant soldiers. But he added that, with such men as they were, a frank and straightforward explanation, such as he proffered, ought to put everything back on the old footing. Thereupon, to prove that it was not fear, but his good-will to them which led him to seek a reconciliation, he showed Orsino letters from Cardinal d'Amboise announcing the speedy arrival of the French troops: he showed him those he had levied himself, desiring, as he said, that they should be thoroughly convinced that his bitterest regret in all this was not so much his own loss of officers of such merit that they were the soul of his vast undertaking, as the idea which the world might conceive, to his great disadvantage, that he could for a single moment have underestimated their worth. He therefore left it in the hands of Paolo Orsino, for whom he had always the greatest affection, to induce the confederates to consent to a peace which would be as advantageous to all concerned as the war was harmful, to each and every one of them, being himself prepared to agree to any sort of accommodation not prejudicial to his honor.

Orsino was just the man for Cæsar's purpose. Being inflated with self-esteem and self-confidence, he was convinced of the truth of the old proverb which says:

"No pope can reign a week if he has both the Colonnas and Orsini against him."

He believed, if not in Cæsar's good faith, in the necessity he was under of being reconciled to them, and consequently he signed, subject to ratification, the following convention on the eighteenth of October, 1502. We copy it from Machiavelli's dispatch to the magnificent republic of Florence.

Agreement Between the Duke of Romagna and the Confederates.

"Let all persons to whom these presents shall come take notice, that his Excellency the Duke of Romagna on the one part, and the Orsini and their allies on the other, desiring to put an end to the discord, enmity, misunderstanding and suspicion now existing between them, do hereby agree to the following terms:

"There shall be peace and alliance between them, without reserve and perpetual, with complete oblivion of all wrongs and insults which may have been hitherto inflicted on either side; the parties reciprocally agreeing to harbor no resentment. In pursuance of the said alliance, his Excellency the Duke of Romagna does take unto himself as confederates and allies forever all the aforesaid nobles; and each of them binds himself to defend the estates of all in general and of each in particular against every power which may attempt to molest or attack them for any cause whatever, always excepting the Pope, Alexander VI. and his Most Christian Majesty Louis XII., King of France; and the aforesaid nobles promise in the same terms to hasten to the defence of the person and estates of his Excellency, as well as those of the Most Illustrious Don Guiffry Borgia, Prince of Squillace, Don Rodrigo Borgia, Duke of Sermonetta and Biselli, and Don Giovanni Borgia, Duke of Camerino and Nepi, brothers or nephews all of his Excellency the Duke of Romagna.

"Furthermore, as the uprising and invasion of the Duchy of Urbino and of Camerino have come to pass during the aforesaid misunderstanding, all the aforesaid confederates and each of them hereby bind themselves

to march with all their available forces to recover said States as well as all other places which have risen in revolt or been attacked.

"His Excellency the Duke of Romagna agrees to restore the Orsini and Vitelli to their former rank in his military service, on the same terms as before.

"He agrees, also, to require but one of them, to be selected by themselves, to serve in person; any service performed by the others will be voluntary.

"He agrees also to secure the ratification by the sovereign pontiff of a second treaty providing that the said pontiff cannot require Cardinal Orsino to remain in Rome for any greater length of time than best suits the convenience of that prelate.

"Furthermore, as there are certain matters at issue between the pope and Signor Giovanni Bentivoglio, the aforesaid confederates agree that they shall be referred without right of appeal to the arbitrament of Cardinal Orsino, his Excellency the Duke of Romagna, and Signor Pandolfo Petrucci.

"The aforesaid confederates also bind themselves, jointly and severally, to place in the hands of the Duke of Romagna, as soon as they shall be called upon by him so to do, one of the legitimate sons of each of them, at such time and place as he shall appoint.

"The said confederates do also mutually agree, each with all the others, that if any plot against one of them shall come to his knowledge, he will warn him of it as well as all the others.

"It is furthermore agreed by the Duke of Romagna and the aforesaid confederates to regard as a common enemy any one who shall fail to observe all or any of the stipulations contained herein, and to join hands to

destroy any powers which do not act in conformity hereto.

"*Signed:*

"CÆSAR,
"PAOLO ORSINO,
"AGAPIT, *Secretary.*"

While Orsino was reporting to the confederates the result of his negotiations with Cæsar, Bentivoglio, being unwilling to accede to the proposed arbitration, suggested to Cæsar that they should settle the points at issue between them by a separate treaty, and sent his son to him to formulate the conditions; after some discussion they were finally agreed upon as follows:

Bentivoglio agreed to cut adrift from the Vitelli and Orsini; he was to furnish Cæsar with a hundred men-at-arms and a hundred mounted cross-bow men for eight years, and pay him twelve thousand ducats a year for the support of a hundred lances.

In return therefor his son Annibal was to marry the sister of the Bishop of Enna, Cæsar's niece, and the pope agreed to recognize his sovereignty in Bologna.

The King of France, the Duke of Ferrara, and the Republic of Florence were to be the guarantors of the treaty.

Meanwhile the provisions of the treaty reported by Orsino met with but slight favor among the confederates. Vitellozo Vitelli particularly, who knew Cæsar more thoroughly than any of the others, repeated again and again that the terms were too liberal and were accorded too promptly not to hide some trap. But in the meantime Cæsar had collected a considerable force at Immola, and the four hundred lances loaned by Louis XII. had at last joined him, so that Vitellozo and Oliverotto concluded to sign the Orsino treaty, and so notified the

Duke of Urbino and the lord of Camerino, who saw that it was impossible for them to defend themselves alone, and so withdrew, one to Città di Castello, and the other to the Kingdom of Naples.

On the tenth of December, without divulging his plans to any one, Cæsar marched toward Cesena with the powerful force he had been collecting. Immediately a feeling of terror spread throughout all Northern Italy. Florence, although he was moving away from her borders, feared that this march was undertaken for no other purpose than to cloak his real intentions; and Venice, whose frontier he was approaching, had sent all her troops away to the banks of the Po. Cæsar took note of this feeling of alarm, and as it was calculated to interfere with his plans by arousing suspicion, he dismissed all the Frenchmen in his service, when he reached Cesena, except a hundred men-at-arms, commanded by M. de Candale, his brother-in-law. This left him with but two thousand cavalry, and ten thousand foot.

Several days were spent in talk, for Cæsar found in the town envoys from the Vitelli and Orsini, who were themselves at the head of their army in the Duchy of Urbino. At the very beginning of the discussion as to the course to be pursued in continuing their career of conquest, there was so much difference of opinion between the commander-in-chief and these envoys that they saw themselves that it was impossible to accomplish anything through intermediaries, and that a conference between Cæsar and one at least of the chiefs was urgently necessary.

Oliverotto da Fermo therefore took his life in his hand, and joined the Duke of Romagna, proposing that they should either march upon Tuscany or seize Sinigaglia, which was the last place in the Duchy of Urbino that had not fallen again into Cæsar's hands.

Cæsar replied that he was unwilling to carry the war into Tuscany, because the Tuscans were his friends; but he approved the project of seizing Sinigaglia, and at once moved his army in the direction of Fano.

Thereupon, the daughter of Frederic, the former Duke of Urbino, who held the town of Sinigaglia (and who was called the "prefectess," because she was the wife of Giovanni della Rovere, appointed prefect of Rome by his uncle Sixtus IV.), concluded that it would be impossible to defend the place against the force brought by the Duke of Romagna; so she left the citadel in command of a captain, whom she urged to obtain the best possible terms for the town, and herself embarked for Venice.

Cæsar was advised of this at Rimini by a courier from Vitellozo and the Orsini, who informed him that the commandant of the citadel refused to surrender it to them, but was willing to treat with him; and that they had therefore promised that he would pay a visit to the town and adjust the matter. Cæsar sent word to them in reply that, in consequence of the intelligence received from them he should send part of his troops to Cesena and Immola; that they were of no use to him since he could rely upon theirs, who, with the escort he proposed to retain, would be quite sufficient for his present purpose, which was simply the complete pacification of the Duchy of Urbino. But, he added, that such pacification was impossible so long as his former friends continued to distrust him to such an extent that they refused to discuss plans in which they were as deeply interested as he, except through the medium of third persons.

The courier carried back this reply to the confederates, who, although they realized the truth of his observations, hesitated nevertheless to do what he asked. Vitellozo Vitelli in particular manifested a distrust of Cæsar, which

it seemed impossible to overcome. At last, however, he gave way to the persistent entreaties of Oliverotto, Gravina, and Orsino, and consented to await the duke's arrival; but he was influenced much more by his reluctance to appear more fearful than his companions, than by any confidence in Cæsar's show of continuing good-will.

When the duke reached Fano on December 20, 1502, he was apprised of this decision which he was so desirous of bringing about. He at once summoned eight of his most faithful adherents, among whom were his nephew Signor d'Enna, Michelotto, and Ugo di Cardona, and ordered them, as they approached Sinigaglia, and Oliverotto, Gravina, Vitellozo and Orsino came forth to meet him, to take their places on their right and left, two for each of the four, as if to do them honor, and in such way that they could at a given signal either arrest them, or stab them. He then designated the particular individual to whom each of them should give his attention, and impressed upon them that they must not leave him until he had entered Sinigaglia and arrived at the quarters prepared for him. He also sent orders to those of his soldiers who were quartered in the neighborhood to assemble to the number of eight thousand on the banks of the Metauro, a small river of Umbria which flows into the Adriatic, and known to history as the scene of Hasdrubal's defeat.

The duke reached the rendezvous appointed for his army on the thirty-first of December. He at once sent two hundred cavalry on before, and the whole body of infantry a short distance behind them; then he took up the line of march himself, surrounded by his men-at-arms, and followed the shore of the Adriatic, with the mountains on his right and the sea on his left, sometimes so

closely pressed between them that the troops could march only ten abreast.

After a march of four hours the duke, on turning an angle in the road, found himself in sight of Sinigaglia, which lies about a mile from the sea, and within an arrow's flight of the mountains. Between the army and the town flowed a little stream which they were obliged to follow down for some distance until at last they found a bridge opposite a suburb of the town. At that point Cæsar drew up his cavalry in two lines, one between the road and the river and the other on the side away from the river, leaving the whole width of the road for the infantry, who marched through, crossed the bridge, entered the town, and drew up in order of battle on the public square.

Vitellozo, Gravina, Orsino and Oliverotto had quartered their troops in the small towns or villages nearby in order to make room for the duke's army. Oliverotto, however, retained about a thousand foot and a hundred and fifty horse, whose barracks were in the suburb by which the duke's troops entered the town.

Cæsar had ridden but a few steps toward the town when he spied Vitellozo, the Duke of Gravina and Orsino waiting at the gate to welcome him; the last two were light-hearted and trustful, but Vitellozo was so sad and depressed that one would have said he divined the fate that was in store for him. Doubtless he had some foreboding of it, for when he left his troops to go to Sinigaglia, he bade them adieu as if he never expected to see them again, commending his family to the care of his officers, and kissed his children with tears streaming down his cheeks; a weakness which seemed strange on the part of a stern, brave-hearted warrior.

The duke rode up to them and held out his hand with

such a frank and amiable expression that it drove away the last vestige of doubt as to his sincerity from the minds of Gravina and Orsino; Vitellozo Vitelli alone retained his air of melancholy dejection.

At the same moment the duke's trusty adherents took their places, as they were bid, at the right and left of those whom they were to watch, and who were all present, save Oliverotto. The duke noticed his absence, and looked uneasily about for him; but as they were passing through the suburb he saw him drilling his troops upon the square. He at once sent Michelotto and Enna to him to say that it was extremely imprudent for him to bring his men out in that way, for they might get into a dispute with the duke's troops, and cause an affray; so that it would be much better for him to send them back to their barracks, and join his companions. Oliverotto, whose destiny drew him in with the others to his fate, made no objection, but ordered his troops back into their barracks, and galloped off to join Cæsar, with Enna and Michelotto on either side. As soon as he spied him Cæsar called to him, grasped his hand, and continued his march toward the palace assigned for his headquarters, with his four victims in his train.

He alighted first at the door, and with a sign to the leader of his men-at-arms to await his orders, passed into the building, followed by Oliverotto, Gravina, Vitellozo Vitelli and Orsino, each still attended by his two familiars. But they had no sooner mounted the staircase and entered the first room than the door was closed behind them, and Cæsar turned about, saying:

"The hour has come!"

It was the appointed signal. Instantly each of the confederates was seized and thrown to the floor, and with a dagger at his throat forced to give up his weapons.

The next moment, while they were being led off to prison, Cæsar opened the window, went out upon the balcony and shouted to the leader of his men-at-arms:

"Go!"

The leader knew what was expected of him, and hurried off with his troop to the barracks occupied by Oliverotto's force, who were taken by surprise and made prisoners. Then the town was given over to pillage, and the duke sent for Machiavelli.

Cæsar and the Florentine envoy were closeted together for some two hours, and we will allow Machiavelli to describe the interview in his own words.

"He sent for me and with a most serene expression dilated upon the satisfaction he derived from the success of this enterprise which he insisted that he had mentioned to me the day before. I recalled the fact, *although I did not then understand what he meant.* He explained very reasonably and with protestations of the highest regard for our good city, the various reasons which led him to desire your alliance, a desire which he hoped that you would reciprocate. He concluded by making me promise to prefer three requests to your lordships in his name: first that you rejoice with him because that has happened which wipes out at a single blow, the king's enemies, yours and his own, and destroys the seeds of trouble and discord which were only too likely to overrun Italy; this service, taken in conjunction with his refusal to join these same prisoners in marching against you ought, he thinks, to arouse your sense of gratitude. Secondly, that you consent to give him a striking proof of your friendship by dispatching cavalry to Borgo, and mustering infantry there, to be at hand, in case of need, to march with him upon Castello or Perouse. Lastly, and this is the third request he makes of you, that you

cause the Duke of Urbino to be arrested, if he should flee from Castello to your dominions, upon learning of Vitellozo's detention. When I pointed out to him that it would not be in consonance with the dignity of the republic to give him up, and that you would never consent to do it, he agreed with me, and said that he would be content if you would detain him and not restore him to liberty without his sanction. I promised his Excellency to write all this to you, and he awaits your reply."

That same night eight masked men went down into the dungeon where the prisoners were confined. They all supposed that their last hour had struck, but at the moment only Vitellozo and Oliverotto were wanted. When these two were informed that their doom was sealed Oliverotto bitterly reproached Vitellozo, charging him with being responsible for his having taken up arms against the duke. The only thing that Vitellozo himself said was that he begged the pope to give him plenary absolution for all his sins. The masked men then led them out, leaving Orsino and Gravina to await their turn. The others were taken to a lonely spot outside the fortifications, where they were strangled, and their bodies at once tossed into graves which had been dug in anticipation.

Orsino and Gravina were allowed to live until Cæsar learned whether the pope had secured the arrest of Cardinal Orsino, Archbishop of Florence, and lord of Santa-Croce. As soon as his Holiness sent word that it had been done, the two prisoners, who had been transferred to the castle of La Pièvre, were also taken out and strangled.

The Duke of Romagna left Sinigaglia immediately after the first execution, leaving full instructions with Michelotto. He assured Machiavelli that he had never

had any other purpose than that of restoring tranquillity in Romagna and Tuscany, and that he believed he had accomplished that purpose by putting to death those who were the cause of all the troubles. As to any uprisings which might take place thereafter they would be nothing more than sparks which a drop of water would extinguish.

The moment that the pope learned that Cæsar had his enemies in his power, being in great haste to play the same game for himself, he sent word to Cardinal Orsino, although it was then midnight, that his son had gained possession of Sinigaglia, and urged him to come to him in the morning and talk over the good news. The cardinal, enchanted by this indication of high favor, was careful not to fail to keep the appointment. Betimes in the morning he mounted his horse to ride to the Vatican; at the first street corner he met the Governor of Rome with a detachment of cavalry, who expressed his pleasure at the happy accident which led them both in the same direction, and escorted him to the door of the pope's palace. There the cardinal alighted, and began to ascend the steps, but was not half way up before his mules and attendants were seized and shut up in the palace stables.

Upon entering the hall of the Parrot he and all his suite were surrounded by armed men, who led him to another apartment, called the Vicar's hall, where he found the Abbè Alviano, the prothonotary Orsino, Giacomo Santa-Croce, and Rinaldo Orsino, prisoners all like himself. At the same time the governor received orders to take possession of the Castle of Monte-Giardino, which belonged to the Orsini, and take away all the jewels, hangings, furniture and plate which it contained.

The governor acquitted himself of this duty conscientiously, and carried to the Vatican everything that he found, even to the cardinal's account books. On

consulting these books the pope made two discoveries: one was that a sum of two thousand ducats was owing to the cardinal, for which no debtor's name was given; and the other, that the cardinal purchased, three months before, for fifteen hundred Roman crowns, a magnificent pearl which was not among the property found in his possession. He thereupon gave orders that, until these errors in the cardinal's accounts were rectified, the men who brought food to him from his mother twice each day, should not be admitted to the Castle of San Angelo. The same day the cardinal's mother sent the pope the two thousand ducats, and the next day his mistress appeared, dressed in man's clothes, and brought the missing pearl. But his Holiness, enraptured by her beauty in that garb, allowed her to keep it at the same price which she paid before, if common report is to be believed.

As to the cardinal, the pope allowed food to be brought him, as before, so that it is not to be wondered at that he died by poison on the twenty-second of February, two days subsequent to that on which his accounts were adjusted.

On the evening of the same day the Prince of Squillace left Rome to take possession, in the pope's name, of the estates of the defunct.

Meanwhile the Duke of Romagna pursued his course to Citta di Castello and Perouse, and gained possession of both places without striking a blow; for the Vitelli fled from the first-named and Giovanni-Paolo Baglione abandoned the second, without even an attempt at resistance.

There remained Sienna, where Pandolfo Petrucci had shut himself up, the only one left of all those who signed the league against him. But Sienna was under the protection of the French; furthermore Sienna was not parcel of the States of the Church, and Cæsar had

no shadow of claim to it. He contented himself therefore with demanding that Pandolfo Petrucci should leave the city, and withdraw to Lucca, which he did.

Thereupon, as everything was tranquil in that quarter, and the whole of Romagna was under his heel, Cæsar resolved to return to Rome, to assist the pope in getting rid of what remained of the Orsini.

This task was made the easier of accomplishment, because Louis XII. having met with reverses in the Kingdom of Naples, was thenceforth too deeply engrossed in his own affairs to disturb himself about those of his allies. And so Cæsar, dealing with the neighborhood of the Eternal City, as he had dealt with Romagna, seized upon Vicovaro, Cera, Palombera, Lanzano and Cervetti in rapid succession.

This conquest accomplished, Cæsar, having subdued the papal territories from the frontiers of Naples to those of Venice, returned to Rome, to concert with his father a plan for transforming his duchy into a kingdom.

Cæsar arrived in Rome just in time to share with Alexander in the succession to Cardinal Giovanni Michele, who had recently died, poisoned by a glass of wine which he took from the pope's own hands.

The future King of Italy found his father meditating an extensive speculation; he had resolved to celebrate St. Peter's Day by the creation of nine cardinals.

He had this to gain by this wholesale creation.

In the first place, those whom he promoted would leave their present posts vacant; they would revert to the pope, and he would sell them.

Secondly, each of the new selections would purchase his appointment at a higher or lower figure according to his means; the price would be left to the pope's caprice and would vary from ten to forty thousand ducats.

Lastly, when they became cardinals, the law took away from them the right to make a will, so that the pope had only to poison them in order to inherit all their possessions. This put him in a position similar to that of the butcher, who when he needs money has only to kill the fattest sheep in his flock.

The promotions took place as planned. The new cardinals were Giovanni Castellar Valentino, Archbishop of Trani; Francesco Remolino, ambassador of the King of Aragon, Francesco Soderini, Bishop of Volterra; Melchior Copis, Bishop of Brissina; Nicolas Fiesque, Bishop of Fréjus; Francesco di Sprate, Bishop of Leone; Adriano Castellense, clerk of the chamber, treasurer-general, and secretary of apostolic letters; Francesco Loris, Bishop of Elva, Patriarch of Constantinople, and secretary to the pope; and Giacomo Casanova, prothonotary, and private chamberlain to his Holiness.

When the price of their elevation was duly paid, and the places left vacant by them had been sold, the pope made his selection of those who were to be poisoned. The number was fixed at three—one of earlier creation, Cardinal Casanova, and two of the new set, Melchior Copis, and Adriano Castellense, the latter of whom took the name of Adriano di Corneto, from the town where he was born; he had amassed an immense fortune in the offices of clerk of the chamber, treasurer-general, and secretary of apostolic letters.

When this course of action was fully agreed upon by Cæsar and the pope, they issued invitations to a supper-party to be given at a villa not far from the Vatican belonging to Cardinal di Corneto. In the morning of the day appointed for this festival, which was the second of August, they sent their own servants and their *maitre*

d'hotel to make all necessary preparations, and Cæsar himself handed to the pope's butler two bottles of wine, with which was mixed a quantity of that white powder resembling sugar, the deadly properties of which he had so often put to the test. He directed him not to serve it until he should tell him to do so, and then only to such of the guests as he should indicate. The butler therefore placed it on a buffet by itself, and cautioned the servants not to touch it, as it was reserved for the pope.*

Toward evening Alexander left the Vatican on foot, leaning on Cæsar's arm, and walked in the direction of the villa, accompanied by Cardinal Caraffa. It was very hot and the ascent was somewhat sharp, so that the pope when he reached the terrace stopped to take breath. At that moment, as he put his hand to his breast, he found that he had left in his bedroom a chain which he was accustomed to wear around his neck, and to which was attached a gold locket containing a consecrated wafer. He had adopted the habit of wearing it because an astrologer had predicted that, so long as he carried a consecrated wafer about with him neither steel nor poison could harm him. He at once ordered Cardinal Caraffa to hurry back to the Vatican to fetch the talisman, describing to him minutely just the spot where he left it. As the walk had made him very thirsty, he turned to a

* The poison used by the Borgias, so say contemporary authors, was of two kinds, a powder and a liquid. The powder was a sort of impalpable white flour, with the taste of sugar, and called *Cantarelle*. Its composition was not known. As to the liquid poison, it was prepared, according to the chroniclers, in such an extraordinary fashion that we cannot pass it over in silence. We will simply quote what we have read, and state nothing upon our own responsibility, lest science take us to task:

"They forced a boar to swallow a strong dose of arsenic; just as the poison was beginning to work they hung him up by his feet; convulsions soon ensued and a poisonous froth flowed freely from his mouth. It was this froth, collected in a silver platter, and hermetically sealed in a flask, which constituted the liquid poison."

servant and asked him for something to drink; and Cæsar, whose thirst was equally great, ordered him to bring two glasses.

By a strange chance it happened that the butler had returned to the Vatican to fetch some superb fish, which were presented to the pope that very day, and which he forgot to bring with him. The servant therefore applied to the under-butler, saying to him that his Holiness and the Duke of Romagna were very thirsty and desired something to quench their thirst. The under-butler, seeing two bottles of wine standing apart, and remembering that he had heard some one say that they were for the pope, took one of them, and from it filled two glasses, which the servant carried to them upon a salver. They both drank without a suspicion that it was the wine which they had themselves prepared to poison their guests.

Meanwhile Cardinal Caraffa ran back to the Vatican, and as he was perfectly familiar with the palace went up to the pope's chamber with a light in his hand, unaccompanied by any servant. As he turned a corner of the corridor, the wind blew his light out; but he kept on, thinking that he had no need to see in order to find what he sought, his instructions were so minute.

But when he opened the door of the apartment he recoiled with a shriek of terror. He thought that he saw before his eyes in the centre of the room, between the door, and the *chiffonière* in which the locket was, Alexander VI. lying motionless and livid in a coffin, with torches burning at the four corners—a fearful vision.

The cardinal stood for a moment with staring eyes and hair on end, without strength to go forward or back; but he finally convinced himself that it was either an illusion of his senses, or an infernal apparition, and made

the sign of the Cross, invoking God's holy name. Immediately it all vanished, torches, bier, and corpse, and the room became dark once more.

Thereupon Cardinal Caraffa (afterwards Pope Paul IV.), who is himself the only authority for this extraordinary experience, boldly entered the room, and although the cold sweat was still standing on his forehead, he went straight to the *chiffonière*, and found the gold chain and locket in the drawer described by the pope. He took them and left the palace in hot haste to return to the villa. He found the guests assembled, the supper served, and his Holiness just about to take his place at the table. As soon as Caraffa appeared in the distance, the pope, who was very pale, started to walk toward him. Caraffa quickened his pace, and handed him the locket, but as he was putting out his hand to take it, he fell backward to the ground with a cry of agony, which was immediately followed by violent convulsions. A few seconds later Cæsar was attacked by the same symptoms as he was running to assist his father. The poison worked more swiftly than usual, for Cæsar had put in a double dose, and their heated state when they drank it, doubtless increased its activity.

The two sick men were carried side by side to the Vatican, where they parted, each to go to his own apartments; from that moment they never saw each other more.

As soon as he was put to bed, the pope was seized with a violent fever which refused to yield, either to emetics or to blood-letting, and it was deemed best to administer the last sacraments of the Church almost immediately. But his vigorous constitution, which seemed to have set the natural effect of advancing years at defiance, struggled against death for a whole week. He died at last

without once mentioning the name of Cæsar or Lucrezia, although they were the two centres around which all his affections and all his crimes revolved. He was seventy-two years old, and his pontificate had lasted eleven years.

It may be that Cæsar drank less of the deadly compound than his father, it may be that the vigor of his youth overpowered the vigor of the poison, it may be, as some claimed, that, when he was taken to his room he swallowed an antidote which was known to none but himself; at all events he did not for an instant lose his perception of the terrible position in which he was placed. He sent at once for his faithful Michelotto with those of his men in whom he placed the most confidence, and distributed them through the various rooms preceding his own; he ordered the leader not to leave the foot of his bed for an instant, and to sleep upon a blanket with his hand on his sword hilt.

The treatment employed in Cæsar's case was the same as in his father's, emetics and blood-letting, with the addition of a strange kind of bath which he asked for himself, having heard it said that King Ladislas of Naples was once cured thereby under similar circumstances.

Four upright posts were firmly attached to the floor of his room; every day a bull was brought in and thrown over on his back, and his legs made fast to the posts. Then an incision a foot and a half long was made in his belly, through which the intestines were taken out, and Cæsar crawled into the still living receptacle, and bathed himself in the animal's blood. When the bull was dead he crawled out again and was rolled in blankets soaked in boiling water, and the profuse perspiration thus induced almost always relieved him.

Every two hours he sent to ask for news of his father's condition; the instant he learned that he was dead, although he was still at the point of death himself, he called into play the force of character and self-command which were a part of his nature, ordered Michelotto to close the gates of the Vatican before his father's demise was known in the city, and absolutely forbade the admission of any person whatsoever until the pope's papers and money had been removed. Michelotto at once executed his orders; he sought out Cardinal Casanova, and with his dagger at his throat compelled him to give up the keys of the pope's apartments and cabinets. Under his guidance he carried off two chests filled with gold, containing some hundred thousand Roman crowns, several boxes filled with jewels, and a vast quantity of plate and valuable vases. It was all taken to Cæsar's chamber and the guard at the door doubled; then the gates of the Vatican were thrown open once more, and the proclamation was made of the pope's demise.

Although it was anticipated, it produced nevertheless a terrible effect throughout the city, for, although Cæsar was still living, his dangerous condition left every one in suspense. Certain it is that if the valiant Duke of Romagna, the mighty man of war, who had taken thirty cities and fifteen fortresses in five years, had been astride his war-horse, sword in hand, in the streets of Rome, there would not have been an instant of hesitation or uncertainty; for, as Machiavelli afterwards said, his ambitious mind had provided for every possible contingency when the pope should die, except that he might be at the point of death himself. But he was nailed to his bed, sweating with agony caused by his own poison; and, although his power of thought was left to him, he had lost his power of action, so that he was fain to wait for what might

happen, and abide by it, instead of going forth to meet it, and imparting direction to it.

He was obliged to regulate his actions not by his own plans, but according to circumstances. His most bitter and inveterate foes, those who could do him the most injury, were the Orsini and the Colonnas; of the former he had shed the blood, and he had stolen the property of the latter. He turned in his need to those, to whom he could restore what he had taken from them, and opened negotiations with the Colonnas.

Meanwhile the obsequies of the pope were proceeded with in due form. The vice-chancellor sent imperative orders to the higher dignitaries among the clergy, to the superiors of convents, and to the lay brethren, not to fail, under penalty of being deprived of their dignities and offices, to betake themselves, each with his flock, to the Vatican, to take part in the funeral ceremonies. Almost without exception they appeared at the appointed hour at the papal palace, whence the body was to be interred. They found the body lying abandoned and alone in the chamber of death; for everybody who bore the name of Borgia, not knowing what might happen, had gone into hiding. It was well for them that they did so, as was shown by what befel one of them, who fell in with Fabio Orsino; the latter stabbed him, and in token of the mutual hatred they had sworn to each other, rinsed his mouth and washed his hands with his blood.

The excitement was so intense in Rome, that, just as Alexander's body was being taken into the church, there arose one of those hoarse, sullen murmurs, characteristic of periods of popular commotion. It produced on the instant so great disturbance in the procession, that the guards drew up in battle order, the clergy sought shelter in the sacristy, and the bearers set down the bier; the

mob at once tore away the pall and uncovered the body, and every one was free to look with impunity upon the man, who, a fortnight earlier, made princes, kings and emperors tremble from one end of the world to the other.

But the instinctive respect for death which every man feels, and which is only sentiment akin to religious feeling that lives in the heart of the veriest atheist, restrained the excitement of the people; the bier was taken up and borne to the foot of the high altar of St. Peter's where it was placed upon trestles, and the face of the deceased pope exposed to the public gaze. But it had turned so black and the features were so bloated and distorted that it was a hideous sight; his mouth was wide open, and his tongue so swollen that it completely filled the cavity. In addition to the frightful appearance, the odor was so unpleasant that not a single soul offered to kiss the hand on which was the fisherman's ring, although it is the invariable custom so to do at the funeral of God's representative on earth.

About seven in the evening, that is to say at the hour when the gathering darkness renders the deathly silence of a church more oppressive and melancholy, four street porters and two workmen carried the pope's body into the chapel where it was to be buried. There it was removed from the catafalque on which it had lain in state, and placed in the casket which was to be its last home. But the casket turned out to be too short, so that they could only get the body in by bending the legs, and pushing with all their strength. Then the carpenters put the lid in place and while one of them sat on it to force down the knees, the other nailed it on to the accompaniment of divers Shakesperean witticisms—a fitting funeral oration to sound a warning to the great ones of the earth.

He was interred according to Tommaso Tommasi, at the left of the high altar of St. Peter's, in a wretched tomb. The next day, this epitaph was found written on the tombstone:

"Vendit Alexander claves, altaria, Christum: emerat ille prius, vendere jure potest."

Which means:

"Alexander sold the keys, the altar and Christ himself: it was right that he should sell them, however, as he bought them in the first place."

By the effect produced at Rome by the demise of Alexander VI., we can conceive of its effect upon the whole civilized world, to say nothing of the rest of Italy. For an instant Europe wavered, for the pillar which sustained the keystone of the political structure had crumbled away, and the fiery blood-red star, around which the universe had revolved for eleven years, was extinct.

Christendom was seized with a sudden paralysis, and remained for a moment speechless in the darkness.

But after the first stupefaction had passed away, everybody who had an injury to avenge rose up and rushed upon the quarry. Sforza recaptured Pesaro, Baglione Perouse, Guido of Ubaldo Urbino, and Rovere Sinigaglia; the Vitelli regained possession of Citta di Castello, the Appiani of Piombino, and the Orsini of Monte-Giordano and their other domains. Romagna alone was unshaken in its fidelity, for the common people, who cared little for the quarrels of the nobles so long as they did not reach them, had never been so happy as they were under Cæsar's rule.

The Colonnas had given them word to observe strict neutrality, in consideration of which they had been restored to possession of their castles, and the cities of

Chinazzano, Capo d'Anno, Frascati, Rocca di Popa, Nettuno, all of which they found in better shape than when they left them, for the pope had spent large sums in beautifying and fortifying them.

Cæsar continued to hold the Vatican with his troops, who remained faithful to him in adversity, and kept guard around the palace where he lay writhing on a bed of pain, roaring like a wounded lion. The cardinals, who scattered in every direction in their fright instead of presiding at the obsequies of the pope, began to hold meetings, sometimes at Minerva, and sometimes at Cardinal Caraffa's. In their alarm at the force which Cæsar still had at his disposal, especially that portion of it which was commanded by Michelotto, they contributed all the money they could raise to levy an army of two thousand men, of whom Carlo Taneo was appointed commander, with the title of Captain of the Sacred College.

They were beginning to hope that this step would really result in restoring tranquillity when they learned that Prosper Colonna was approaching from Naples with three thousand men, and Fabio Orsino from Viterbo with two hundred horse and more than a thousand foot. They entered Rome on successive days, both being moved by the same ardent wish to make the most of the opportunity.

Thus there were five armies in Rome, almost in sight of each other; Cæsar's which was in possession of the Vatican and the Borgo; the army of the Bishop of Nicastro, to whom Cæsar had given charge of the Castle of San Angelo, and who refused to give it up; the army of the Sacred College, quartered in the suburb of Minerva; Prosper Colonna's in camp by the Capitol; and Fabio Orsino's in barracks at Ripetta.

The Spaniards too, had advanced to Terracina, and the French to Nepi.

The cardinals realized that Rome was over a mine which the least spark would explode. They assembled the ambassadors of the Emperor of Germany, the Kings of France and Spain, and the Republic of Venice, to urge them to make themselves heard in the names of their masters. The ambassadors were thoroughly impressed with the gravity of the situation, and began by declaring the Sacred College inviolable; they then ordered the Colonnas, the Orsini, and the Duke of Romagna, severally, to leave Rome at once.

The Orsini were the first to bow to this order; on the following day their example was followed by the Colonnas. Cæsar alone was left, and he said that he would consent to go, but desired first to exact certain conditions. He declared that the cellars of the Vatican were mined, and that if they refused what he asked, he would blow himself up with those who came to take him. They were well aware that there was nothing he was not capable of doing, so they treated with him.

It was agreed that he should leave Rome with his army, his artillery and his baggage-train, and that the Sacred College should add four hundred infantry to his force to insure him against attack or annoyance in the streets of Rome.

Cæsar promised that he would remain at least ten miles from Rome during the sessions of the conclave, and that he would engage in no undertaking against the city or any other of the States of the Church. Fabio Orsino and Prosper Colonna made a similar agreement. The Venetian ambassador guaranteed the performance of the agreement by the Orsini, the Spanish ambassador did as much for the Colonnas, and the ambassador of Louis

XII. for the Duke of Romagna. At the appointed time Cæsar dispatched in the first place his artillery, consisting of eighteen guns, accompanied by the four hundred foot-soldiers sent by the Sacred College, to each one of whom he gave a ducat. Behind the artillery came a hundred chariots, escorted by his vanguard.

The duke emerged from the Vatican, lying on a bed shaded by a scarlet canopy, and borne by twelve of his halberdiers. His elbow was resting on the cushions, and his head was supported by his hand, so that every one could see his purple lips and bloodshot eyes. His naked sword lay at his side, as if to indicate that, weak as he was, he would make use of it at need; his best war horse, with black velvet trappings upon which his arms were embroidered, was led by a page beside his bed, so that he could leap into the saddle in case of a sudden attack. Before and behind him, and to right and left, his army bore him company, with arms in readiness, but with no sound of drum or trumpet, the result being that the whole effect of the cortège was decidedly funereal.

At the city gate they found Prosper Colonna waiting with a considerable force.

Cæsar's first thought was that Colonna proposed to break his agreement, as he himself had so often done, and attack him. He at once ordered a halt, and prepared to mount his horse; but Colonna divined his fear, and came forward alone to his bedside. His purpose in waiting, he said, was to offer to escort Cæsar to his destination, fearing an ambuscade on the part of Fabio Orsino, who had freely sworn that he would either avenge the death of his father, Paolo Orsino, or lose his own honor in the attempt.

Cæsar thanked him, but replied that so long as Orsino

was alone he had no fear of him. So Colonna saluted him, and rode back to his troops, with whom he took the direction of Albano, while Cæsar, headed for Città Castellana, which was still true to him.

When he arrived there Cæsar found that he not only had his own fate in his own hands once more, but that he was in a position to decide the fate of others as well. Out of the twenty-two votes his father had in the Sacred College, twelve were faithful to himself, and as the conclave consisted in all of thirty-seven cardinals, he held the balance of power with his twelve, and could give whatever direction he chose to the action of the conclave. Consequently he was made much of by the Spanish faction and the French faction in equal measure, each being desirous of the election of a pope of its own nation. Cæsar listened to them all without promising or refusing anything, and finally gave his twelve votes to Françesco Piccolomini, Cardinal of Sienna, one of his father's creatures, who continued to be friendly to him. He was chosen pope on October 8, and took the name of Pius III.

Cæsar's hopes were not disappointed: as soon as his election was announced, Pius sent him a safe-conduct to return to Rome, and the duke reappeared there with two hundred and fifty men-at-arms, and eight hundred infantry. He took up his quarters in his own palace, and his troops camped in the neighborhood.

Meanwhile the Orsini, in pursuance of their purpose to wreak vengeance upon Cæsar, were levying great numbers of troops in Perouse and its neighborhood with whom to attack him even in Rome itself. They thought they could discern that France, in whose service they then were, was very considerate in her treatment of the duke, on account of his twelve votes, upon which she relied to

secure the choice of Cardinal d'Amboise at the approaching conclave; and so they went over to the Spaniards.

About the same time Cæsar signed a new treaty with Louis XII., whereby he bound himself to support him with all his power, and in person, as soon as he could sit a horse, in maintaining his hold upon Naples: Louis XII. on his side guaranteed him the possession of those States which he still held and promised to assist him to recover those he had lost.

On the day when this treaty was known, Gonzalvo of Cordova caused to be promulgated to the sound of trumpets in the streets of Rome, an order to every subject of the King of Spain serving in the army of any other nation to break his engagement at once, under pain of being deemed guilty of high treason. This measure deprived Cæsar of ten or twelve of his best officers and about three hundred soldiers.

Thereupon the Orsini, knowing of this reduction of his army entered Rome, under the countenance of the Spanish ambassador, and cited Cæsar to appear before the pope and the Sacred College, there to be called to account for his crimes.

True to his promise, Pius III. replied that the Duke of Romagna, being a sovereign prince, was responsible to no human being but himself so far as his temporal acts were concerned, and only God could call him to account therefor.

However, the pope felt that, notwithstanding that his will was good, he might not be able to protect Cæsar against his enemies for long; and so he advised him to try and join the French army which was still marching upon Naples, insisting that there and only there would he be in safety.

Cæsar determined to withdraw to Bracciano, where

Giovanni Giordano Orsino, who once went with him to France, and was the only one of his family who had not declared against him, offered him protection in the name of Cardinal d'Amboise. One morning he ordered his troops under arms, and, taking his place at their head, rode out of Rome.

But, although Cæsar had maintained absolute secrecy concerning his plan, the Orsini had notice of it. The night before his departure they led all their available troops out by the San-Pancrazio gate, and, by making a long detour succeeded in intercepting him. So that when Cæsar reached Storta, he found the army of the Orsini, which was at least half as large again as his own, awaiting his coming in order of battle.

Cæsar realized that to fight in his still feeble state was to rush straight upon destruction; he therefore ordered his troops to retrace their steps, and being an excellent strategist he managed his retreat so skilfully, that the enemy, while following close upon his heels, did not dare to attack him, and he re-entered the papal city without the loss of a single man.

On this occasion Cæsar rode straight to the Vatican in order to place himself still more directly under the pope's protection. He distributed his soldiers around the palace in such way as to keep watch upon all the exits therefrom.

The Orsini were determined to bring matters to a crisis with him wherever he might be, without regard to the sanctity of the spot; and they attempted so to do, but without success, his troops kept such good watch, and presented such a bold front.

When they failed to force the defences of the Castle of San Angelo, they hoped to have better luck by leaving the city again, and returning to the attack by the Torione gate. But Cæsar anticipated the manœuvre,

and they found the gate barricaded and well guarded. They nevertheless persisted in their plan, and thenceforth pursued openly the vengeance which they hoped to obtain by stratagem. Having taken by surprise the approaches to the gate they set fire to it; and through the opening thus made forced their way into the garden of the Vatican where they found Cæsar awaiting them at the head of his cavalry.

Brought face to face with imminent danger, Cæsar seemed to recover all his prowess; he led his troops in a headlong rush upon the enemy, calling loudly upon Orsino by name, in the hope of making an end of him in a personal encounter. But Orsino either did not hear him, or did not dare meet him hand in hand; and after a desperate struggle, Cæsar, whose numerical strength was less than a third that of his adversary, saw his cavalry cut to pieces, and was obliged to seek refuge in the Vatican, having himself performed miracles of strength and daring.

He found the pope writhing in the death agony. The Orsini, weary of struggling against the effects of the promise the old man had given to Cæsar, had succeeded, through the medium of Pandolfo Petrucci, in winning over the pope's surgeon, who applied a poisoned plaster to a wound on one of his legs.

The pope, as we say, was at the point of death when Cæsar, covered with dust and reeking with blood, rushed into his apartment, hotly pursued by his enemies, who stopped only at the very walls of the palace, behind which the remnant of his army was drawn up in some sort of order.

Pius III., who felt that he was dying, rose in his bed, and handed Cæsar the key of the passage leading to the Castle of San Angelo, together with an order to the governor of the fortress to admit him with his family, to

defend him to the last extremity, and to allow him to take his leave whenever he so desired. Then he fell back in a swoon upon the bed.

Cæsar took his two daughters by the hand, and took refuge in this last asylum which was open to him, followed by the little dukes of Sermonetta and Nepi.

That same night the pope died after a reign of twenty-six days.

About two o'clock in the morning, just as the breath was leaving his body, Cæsar, who had thrown himself fully dressed upon his bed, heard the door of his chamber open. Unable to conceive what any one could want with him at that hour, he raised himself on his elbow, feeling with the other hand for the hilt of his sword; but at the first glance he recognized his nocturnal visitor; it was Giulio della Rovere.

Devoured by poison though he was, abandoned by his troops, and lamentably fallen from the dizzy height of power and influence, Cæsar, although he could do nothing for himself might still make a pope! Giulio della Rovere had come to buy the votes of his twelve cardinals.

Cæsar laid down his conditions, which were accepted.

Immediately after his election Giulio was to assist him to recover his Romagnese dominions; Cæsar was to continue to be General of the Church! and Francesco Maria della Rovere was to wed one of his daughters.

On these conditions Cæsar sold his twelve cardinals to Giulio.

On the following day at Giulio's request, the Sacred College ordered the Orsini to leave Rome during the sittings of the conclave.

On the thirty-first of October, 1503, on the first ballot, Giulio della Rovere was chosen pope, and took the name of Julius II.

Almost his first act after his installation at the Vatican was to invite Cæsar to return thither, and to give him his former apartment. Thereupon the duke, whose convalescence was well advanced, began to look to the rehabilitation of his affairs, which had been going from bad to worse for some time past.

The defeat of his army, and his withdrawal to the Castle of San Angelo, where he was thought to be held a prisoner, had brought about great changes in Romagna. Cesena became once more a fief of the Church as formerly; Giovanni Sforza re-entered Pesaro; Ordelafi seized upon Forli; Malatesta made good his claim to Rimini; the people of Immola murdered their governor, and the city was about equally divided between those who wished to restore the Riarii to power, and those who wished to become one of the States of the Church. Faenza remained faithful longer than any other place, but at last it, too, lost hope of Cæsar's recovering his power, and recalled the Manfredi in the person of Francesco, natural son of Galeotto Manfredi, the last and only scion of that ill-starred race, of which all the legitimate descendants had been murdered by Borgia.

It should be said that the fortresses in these various places had taken no part in the general overturning, but remained unshaken in their fidelity to the Duke of Romagna; so that it was not the defection of the towns which caused him and Julius II. the greatest uneasiness, for the possession of the fortresses would make it easy to reconquer them. The attitude assumed by Venice with reference to these towns was a much more fruitful source of anxiety.

In the spring of that year Venice concluded a treaty of peace with the Turk. Being thus rid for the time of her eternal enemy, she moved her troops in the direction

of Romagna, which she had always coveted. They were massed at Ravenna, the last place within her territories, and placed under the command of Jacopo Venieri, who came within an ace of taking Cesena by surprise, and failed only because of the dauntless bravery of the people. This rebuff, however, was soon compensated by the surrender of the fortresses of Val di Lamone, and Faenza, by the capture of Forlini Popoli, and by the surrender of Rimini, which Pandolfo Petrucci, its suzerain, exchanged for the lordship of Cittadella in Padua, and a place in the ranks of the Venetian nobility.

Thereupon Cæsar made a proposition to Julius II., namely that the Church should take over his Romagnese dominions temporarily, so that the respect entertained by the Venetians for the papal jurisdiction might save them from their incursions. But, says Guicciardini, Julius II., in whose heart the ambition so natural to sovereign princes had not yet stifled every vestige of uprightness, refused to take over the places, to avoid the inevitable temptation to retain them, contrary to his premises, when called upon to give them back.

As the situation was becoming serious, however, he suggested to Cæsar that he leave Rome and take ship at Ostia for Spezzia, where Michelotto was waiting to receive him, at the head of a hundred men-at-arms and a hundred light horse, the only remnant of his magnificent army. Thence he could go by land to Ferrara, and from Ferrara to Immola, and from that place raise his war-cry loud enough to be heard throughout Romagna.

This was advice after Cæsar's own heart, and he accepted it without a moment's hesitation. His plan was approved by the Sacred College, and Cæsar set out for Ostia, accompanied by Bartolomeo della Rovere, his Holiness' nephew.

Cæsar believed that he was free at last, and in his fancy saw himself astride his war-horse, bearing his blood-stained banner once more into those regions where he had already fought and conquered; but at Ostia he was overtaken by the Cardinals of Sorrento and Volterra, who demanded, in the name of Julius II., the delivery of the self-same citadels which only three days before he refused to receive. The fact was that in the interim the pope had learned that the Venetians were steadily advancing, and had come to see that Cæsar's plan was the only one which would check them.

But now it was Cæsar's turn to refuse, for all this vacillation alarmed him; he feared that it concealed some trap, and he consequently replied that the cession which the pope called for was useless, for with God's help he would be in Romagna within a week.

The Cardinals of Sorrento and Volterra returned to Rome with his refusal, and the next morning, as Cæsar was stepping aboard his galley, he was arrested in the name of the pope.

His first thought was that it was all over with him; he was thoroughly familiar with such modes of procedure, and knew how short is the distance between the prison and the tomb. Indeed there would be even less difficulty about making the journey short in his case than in most, because the pope could if he chose, find no end of pretexts for proceeding against him. But the then pope's heart was of a different temper from his; he was quick to wrath, but equally quick to recover from it, and when the Duke of Romagna was brought back to Rome by his guards, the momentary irritation which Julius felt at his refusal had already vanished, and he was welcomed by him with his usual courtesy and affability. It was easy to see, however, that close watch

was kept upon his movements thereafter. In return for his cordial welcome Cæsar agreed to cede to him the fortress of Cesena, as a town which formerly belonged to the Church and was now restored to her. He placed the act of cession signed by himself, in the hands of one of his captains, named Pierre Oviedo, and ordered him to take possession of the fortress in the name of the Holy See. Oviedo at once set out for Cesena, and presented himself, armed with the aforesaid act, before Diego Chignone, a Spanish nobleman and general, who held the fortress on behalf of the Duke of Romagna.

After perusing the document handed him by Oviedo, Don Diego replied that he knew his lord and master to be a prisoner, and it would be rank infamy in him to obey an order which was in all probability extorted from him by duress. He added, that in his opinion the bearer of the order deserved death for having undertaken so dastardly a mission; he therefore ordered his soldiers to throw him from the top of the wall, and his orders were executed on the spot.

This scrupulous fidelity was near being fatal to Cæsar; when the pope learned of the way his messenger had been treated he flew into such a towering passion that his prisoner for the second time thought himself lost. He therefore attempted to purchase his liberty by making certain new propositions to Julius, which were put in the form of a treaty and sanctioned by a bull.

The Duke of Romagna was bound thereby to place in the hands of his Holiness within forty days the fortresses of Cesena and Bertorino, and to countersign the order for the surrender of the fortress of Forli; the whole to be guaranteed by two bankers of Rome in the sum of fifteen thousand ducats, the sum total of the expenses alleged

by the governor to have been incurred there on the duke's account.

On his side the pope agreed that Cæsar should be escorted to Ostia with no other guard than the Cardinal of Santa-Croce and two officers, who were to restore him to liberty absolutely as soon as his agreements were carried out. If he failed to carry them out he was to be taken back to Rome and imprisoned in the Castle of San Angelo.

In pursuance of this treaty Cæsar descended the Tiber to Ostia, accompanied by the pope's treasurer, and several of his servants; the Cardinal of Santa-Croce set out somewhat later, and overtook him the same day.

However, Cæsar feared that, after the fortresses were given up, Julius II. might break his word, and detain him as a prisoner; so he made a request, through the medium of Cardinals Borgia and Remolino, who had fled to Naples because they thought that they were not safe in Rome, he made a request, through them, for a safe-conduct from Gonzalvo of Cordova, and for two galleys, that he might join him in Naples. The same courier returned at once with the safe-conduct, and announced that the galleys would follow very soon.

Meanwhile the Cardinal of Santa-Croce had learned that the governors of Cesena and Bertorino had turned over those fortresses to the agents of his Holiness; so that he gradually relaxed his vigilance, and began to allow him to go about without a guard, knowing that his liberty would be fully restored within a day or two.

Cæsar, with the fear at his heart that the same thing which happened to him as he was stepping aboard the pope's galleys a short time before, might happen to him again as he was stepping aboard Gonzalvo's, concealed

himself in a house just outside the town, and after nightfall rode to Nettuno on a peasant's sorry nag. There he hired a small boat, and set sail for Mont-Dragone, whence he made his way to Naples.

Gonzalvo received him with such exuberant delight that Cæsar went entirely astray as to his motive, and congratulated himself that he was safe at last. His confidence increased twofold when he laid his projects before Gonzalvo, and told him that he proposed to go to Pisa and make his way thence into Romagna, for Gonzalvo authorized him to levy as many soldiers in Naples as he chose, and promised him two galleys to transport them.

Cæsar, with every possible suspicion lulled to sleep by these demonstrations, tarried at Naples nearly six weeks, meeting the Spanish governor every day, and discussing his present and future projects with him.

But Gonzalvo's object in detaining him was simply to gain time to advise the King of Spain that his foe was in his hands. When Cæsar betook himself to the castle, to take his leave of Gonzalvo, having already sent his troops aboard the galleys in anticipation of speedy departure, the governor received him as courteously as his wont was, wished him all sorts of good luck, and embraced him when they parted. But at the castle gate, Cæsar found one of Gonzalvo's officers, one Nuño Campejo, who arrested him in the name of Ferdinand the Catholic.

Cæsar heaved a deep sigh, and bitterly cursed his luck, which had led him, who had so often broken his own word, to trust to the word of an enemy.

He was immediately taken to the castle, and the dungeon door closed upon him, leaving him utterly helpless of succor from any quarter; for the only being on earth whose devotion still endured was Michelotto, and he was

told that Michelotto had also been arrested in the neighborhood of Pisa by order of Julius II.

While he was being taken to prison an officer came to him and took away the safe-conduct sent him by Gonzalvo.

On the day following his arrest, which took place on the twenty-seventh of May, 1504, Cæsar was taken aboard a galley, which at once weighed anchor, and made all sail for Spain; throughout the voyage he had nobody but a single page to serve him, and immediately upon his debarkation he was taken to the Castle of Medina del Campo.

Ten years later Gonzalvo, on his death bed at Loxa, himself a proscribed and hunted man, confessed that there were two actions which weighed heavily upon his conscience when he thought of appearing before the judgment seat of God; one was his treachery to Ferdinand, and the other his breach of faith with Cæsar.

Cæsar remained two years in prison, living on the hope that Louis XII. would demand his release as a peer of France. But Louis XII. was panic stricken by the defeat of his army in the battle of Garigliano, which rescued the Kingdom of Naples from his grasp, and he had enough to occupy him with his own affairs, without undertaking to intervene in his cousin's.

The prisoner was beginning to despair, when, on breaking the bread brought to him one morning for breakfast, he found inside a file, a vial of some sleep-producing liquid, and a note from Michelotto to the effect that he had escaped from prison, had left Italy and followed him to Spain, and was in hiding in the nearest village with the Count of Benevento. He added that he and the count would await him every night on the road from the fortress to the village with three excellent horses; and

that he, Cæsar, must make the best possible use of the file and the vial. When the whole world turned its back upon the Duke of Romagna, a mere hired desperado remembered him.

The confinement Cæsar had endured for two years bore too hard upon him for him to lose a single instant. He set to work the same day upon one of the bars at his window, which looked upon an interior courtyard, and easily succeeded in putting it in such a state that but one wrench was needed to sever it. But not only was the window some seventy feet from the ground; the only means of exit from the courtyard was a postern reserved exclusively for the governor, of which he alone had a key; and that key never went out of his possession but hung at his belt by day, and lay beneath his pillow at night. Therein lay the principal difficulty to be overcome.

Prisoner as he was Cæsar was always treated with the consideration due his name and rank. Every day at the dinner hour the governor sent to his cell to invite him to dine with him, and did the honors of his table like the noble, courteous gentleman he was. It should be said that Don Manuel, the governor, was an old campaigner who had served with honor under King Ferdinand: the result being that, while he kept the closest watch upon Cæsar, in accordance with strict orders he had received, he had the greatest respect for such a gallant officer, and listened with great delight to his stories of the battles he had taken part in.

He frequently insisted that Cæsar should breakfast as well as dine with him; but fortunately for him, perhaps because he had a presentiment of what was to happen, he always declined that honor up to this time. Well was it for him that he did so, for if he had not breakfasted

alone he would not have received the means or instruments of escape sent in by Michelotto.

It so happened that Cæsar, on the very evening after he received them, made a misstep as he was ascending the stairs to his room, and sprained his ankle. When the dinner hour arrived he tried to go down, but the pain was so great, so he said, that he gave up the idea. The governor went to his room to see him, and found him at full length upon the bed.

The next day Cæsar seemed to be no better, and the governor after a solitary dinner came to visit him as he did the night before. He found him so depressed and bored by solitude that he offered to take supper with him there, and Cæsar gratefully welcomed the suggestion.

On this occasion the prisoner entertained his gaoler, and did it with charming tact and courtesy. The governor took advantage of their mutual waiver of reserve to ask him many questions as to the manner of his arrest, and like a true knight of old Castile, in whose mind honor still counted for something, begged to know the truth as to the breach of faith committed by Gonzalvo and Ferdinand in respect of him. Cæsar seemed more than willing to tell him the whole story, but implied by a sign that the servants were in the way. This seemed so natural, that the governor took no offence, but hurried everybody out of the room so that the story might be begun as soon as possible.

When the door was closed, Cæsar filled his own glass and the governor's, proposing the king's health; the governor drank it enthusiastically. Cæsar thereupon began his narrative, but was less than a third of the way through when his guest's eyes closed as if by magic, despite the engrossing interest of the story, and he fell forward upon the table, sound asleep.

Half an hour later the servants, hearing no noise, entered the room and found one of the two under the table and the other upon it. It was not an event sufficiently out of the common for any great notice to be taken of it; so they simply took Don Manuel away to his apartments and lay Cæsar upon his bed: the dessert was postponed until the following day. They then secured the door with the greatest care, and left the prisoner alone.

He lay for a moment without motion and apparently plunged in most profound slumber. But when the steps died away he gently ráised his head, opened his eyes, slipped off the bed, walked to the door (slowly, it is true, but without apparent inconvenience from his accident of the night before), and stood for some moments with his ear to the key hole. Then he raised his head with an indefinable expression of satisfaction, drew his hand across his forehead, and for the first time since his guards left him breathed freely.

There was no time to lose; his first care was to secure the door as firmly on the inside as it was secured on the outside: then he blew out his lamp, opened the window and finished cutting through the bar. When this was done, he unwound the bandages on his leg, and tore down the bed curtains and those at the window; these he tore into strips and added the sheets, coverlid and napkins. All these different articles tied together made a rope some fifty or sixty feet long; he then made knots in it at short intervals, tied the rope securely by one end to the bar next the one he had cut, climbed through the window, and began to carry out the really dangerous part of his undertaking, clinging with feet and hands to his slender support. Happily he was as strong as he was clever, and let himself down the whole length of

the rope in safety; but when he reached the end and was clinging with his hands to the last knot he felt in vain with his feet for the solid earth; the line was too short!

He was in a fearful plight; the darkness was so intense that he could not see how far he was from the earth and he was too weary to think of trying to retrace his steps. He uttered a short prayer (he alone can say whether it was addressed to God or Satan); then let go the line, and fell some twelve or fifteen feet.

The danger was too pressing for the fugitive to think about the few slight bruises he sustained; he scrambled at once to his feet, and looking about for his window took his bearings and went straight to the little postern. He put his hand in the pocket of his doublet,—horror of horrors!—the cold sweat stood on his brow: whether he had left it in his cell, or dropped it in his fall, certain it was that he no longer had the key.

On reflection, however, he discarded the first idea, and decided that he must have dropped it. He walked back through the courtyard trying to locate the spot where it must have fallen, with reference to the wall of a cistern upon which he remembered placing his hand when he rose, but the key was so small, and the night so dark that there was little chance that his search would be rewarded. However, Cæsar bent all his energies upon it, for the key was his last resource. Suddenly he heard a door open, and a night patrol appeared preceded by two torches. For a moment Cæsar thought he was lost; but he remembered the cistern behind him, and at once climbed down into it, leaving only his head above the water. In that position he followed with the deepest anxiety the movements of the soldiers, who came toward him, passed within a few feet of him, crossed the

courtyard and disappeared through a door on the opposite side.

Although the lights carried by the party passed almost like a flash of lightning, their rays fell upon the ground, and Cæsar saw the key shine where it lay. The door through which the soldiers disappeared was no sooner closed behind them than he was a free man once more.

Half way to the village two horsemen, with a led horse, were awaiting him: they were the Count of Benevento and Michelotto. Cæsar leaped upon the led horse, and pressed the hands of the count and the bravo with equal warmth, and all three rode away at full speed for the frontier of Navarre, where they arrived after a three days' journey, and where he received a cordial welcome from King Jean d'Albret, his wife's brother.

From Navarre Cæsar intended to make his way into France, and from France, with the concurrence of Louis XII., renew his attempts upon Italy. But during his detention in the Castle of Medina del Campo, Louis had made peace with the King of Spain; so that, when he heard of Cæsar's flight, instead of supporting him, as he had some right to expect that he would do, being connected with him by marriage, he deprived him of his duchy of Valentinois and discontinued his pension. Cæsar still had, however, about two hundred thousand ducats to his credit with certain bankers at Genoa; he wrote them to send him that sum, proposing to employ it in raising troops in Spain and Naples for a descent upon Pisa. Five hundred men, two hundred thousand ducats, his name and his sword, were more than enough to keep hope alive in his breast.

The bankers refused to honor his drafts, and Cæsar was at his brother-in-law's mercy.

About this time a vassal of the King of Navarre,

Prince Alarino, raised the standard of revolt. Cæsar took command of the army sent against him by Jean d'Albret, and was accompanied by Michelotto, whose fidelity was the same in adversity as in prosperity. By virtue of Cæsar's gallant conduct, and the skilful disposition of his forces, Prince Alarino was defeated in the first engagement; but two days later, having rallied what remained of his army, he offered battle about three o'clock in the afternoon.

Cæsar accepted the challenge, and for more than four hours the struggle was most desperate on both sides; at last as the sun was sinking below the horizon, Cæsar determined to decide the affair one way or the other by leading a charge with a hundred men-at-arms, upon a squadron of cavalry which formed the mainstay of his opponent's force. To his great astonishment the cavalry fell back at the first onset, and fled, as if seeking cover, to a little wood. Cæsar followed with lance in rest to the edge of the forest; but at that point the fugitives suddenly turned about, and were reinforced by three or four hundred archers, who rushed out from beneath the trees. Cæsar's followers, seeing that they had fallen into an ambuscade, took to their heels and basely deserted their master.

Although he was left entirely alone, Cæsar refused to yield an inch. It may be that he had had enough of life, and that his heroism was due to disgust rather than to courage. However that may be, he defended himself like a lion, but at last, when he was fairly riddled with arrows and cross-bow bolts, his horse fell and pinned his leg to the ground. At once his adversaries rushed upon him, and one of them aimed a blow at his defenceless breast with a pike, and ran him through with its keen, slender head. Cæsar shrieked out a fearful curse, and died.

Meanwhile the rest of Alarino's army was beaten, thanks to the personal prowess of Michelotto, who bore himself like a gallant soldier; but when he returned to camp in the evening, he learned from those who had fled that they left Cæsar behind, and he had not reappeared. He was but too well convinced, in view of his master's well-known courage, that some misfortune must have happened to him, and he determined to prove his devotion for the last time by rescuing his body from the wolves and birds of prey. He ordered torches to be lighted, for it was a very dark night, and with ten or twelve of those who followed Cæsar as far as the little wood, began to search for his master. When they reached the spot in question he saw five bodies stretched out side by side; four were dressed, but the fifth had been robbed of his clothing, and was entirely naked.

Michelotto alighted, raised the dead man's head and laid it on his knee, and by the fitful glare of the torches recognized Cæsar.

Thus died, on March 10, 1507, on an unknown battle-field, near-by an obscure village called Viane, in a paltry skirmish with the rebellious vassal of a petty king, the man whom Machiavelli has presented to earthly princes as a model of ability, political genius, and personal courage.

Lucrezia, the beautiful Duchess of Ferrara, died full of years and honors, adored by her subjects as a queen, and extolled as a goddess by Ariosto and Bembo.

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There was once at Paris, if we may believe Boccaccio, a worthy and upright merchant, one Jean de Civigny, who drove a thriving trade as a cloth-maker, and was closely connected in business, and on intimate terms as a neighbor, with a very wealthy confrère, named

Abraham, whose reputation was of the best, although he was a Jew.

Now Jean de Civigny appreciated the worthy Israelite's many good qualities, and dreaded to think that such a fine fellow might be led to everlasting perdition by his false belief. So he began in a mild and friendly way to beg him to renounce his errors, and to open his eyes to the beauty of the Christian religion, which, so far as he could judge, was waxing greater and more prosperous every day, as it came to be more generally recognized as the only true faith; while his, on the other hand, was losing ground so rapidly that it would soon disappear altogether from the face of the earth.

The Jew replied that there was no salvation except in the Jewish religion, that he was born therein, and proposed to live and die therein, and that he knew of no consideration under heaven which would bring him to a different view. Nevertheless, so fervent was his desire to make a convert, Jean refused to admit defeat, and there was not a day on which he did not conclusively demonstrate the superiority of the Christian to the Jewish religion in the honeyed words with which the clever merchant seduces the unwilling purchaser. Although Abraham was a leading light among the believers in the Mosaic law, either because of his friendship for Jean de Civigny, or because the Holy Spirit gave force to the eloquence of the new apostle, he began at last to relish the good merchant's preaching. He still persisted, to be sure, in his allegiance to the old faith, and refused to change; but his obstinacy did but redouble Jean's determination to effect his conversion, until at last, with God's help he succeeded in making him waver.

"Listen, Jean," said Abraham one day; "as you are so very earnest in your desire to convert me, I am more

than inclined to gratify you; but first of all I propose to go to Rome, and see the man whom you call God's vicar upon earth, study his mode of life and his habits, as well as those of his brothers the cardinals; and if, as I doubt not, they are in harmony with the moral precepts which you preach, I will admit, what you have taken such infinite pains to prove to me, that your faith is better than mine, and I will do as you wish; but if, on the other hand, I find a different state of things, I will remain a Jew as I am, for it is not worth while, at my age, to change my belief for a worse one."

Jean was in despair when he heard this, for he said to himself, disconsolately:

"Here I have thrown away all the time and trouble which I thought I was employing to such good advantage in the attempt to convert this unfortunate Abraham; for if he is so ill-advised as to go to Rome, as he suggests, and see the disgraceful life which the pillars of the Church lead, instead of turning Christian, he would be more inclined to turn Jew if he were a Christian."

He turned to Abraham, and said:

"Oh! why do you go to all the expense and weariness of a journey to Rome, my friend? Furthermore, whether you go by land or sea, it's a very hazardous undertaking for so wealthy a man as you are. Do you imagine that there is no one here to baptize you? Or, if you still have some doubts as to what I have urged upon you, where will you find theologians better fitted to combat and destroy them than here in Paris? For these reasons, you see, the journey seems to me altogether unnecessary; just imagine that the prelates down yonder are just as their brethren here are, and even better on account of their nearness to the supreme shepherd. If you take my advice you will postpone this fatiguing enterprise

until the time when you require plenary absolution for some heinous sin; then we will go together."

"I believe, my dear Jean," the Jew replied, "that it's all as you say; but you know how obstinate I am. Either I will go to Rome, or I will not turn Christian."

Jean saw that it was useless to argue further with him, and wished him a pleasant journey. He abandoned all hope of his conversion, however, for he was sure that if the court of Rome was what it was when he saw it himself, his friend would return from his pilgrimage a more devout Jew than ever.

Abraham mounted his horse, and made such speed as he was able to the Eternal City, where he arrived in due time, and was received with open arms by his co-religionists. After he had taken his bearings, so to speak, he set about investigating the manners and customs of the pope and cardinals, the other prelates, and the whole court. But to his unbounded astonishment, he found, by what he saw himself, as well as by what was told him, that from the pope down to the humblest sacristan of St. Peter's, every man of them was steeped to the lips in guilty unbridled indulgence in every sort of debauchery, without remorse or shame: so that the attractive young people of both sexes were supreme in the distribution of honors and favors. In addition to the open prevalence of the sin of debauchery, he found that they were gluttons and hard drinkers, and that to such a degree, that they were more the slaves of their stomachs than the very swine.

When he probed still deeper he found that they were so avaricious, and so greedy of gain, that they bought and sold human blood and things divine for cash, and with less conscience than characterized the dealings of the merchants of Paris.

Having seen all this and many things more, so disgraceful that they would sully the page on which they were written, Abraham, who was a chaste, sober, upright man, thought that he had seen enough, and determined to return to Paris, which he did with the promptness with which he ordinarily carried out his resolutions.

Jean de Civigny was delighted beyond measure when he returned, although he had lost all hope of finding him a convert. He gave him time to settle down before he broached the subject, thinking that any time would be soon enough to learn the bad news he anticipated. But after a few days' rest Abraham came of his own motion to visit his friend, and Jean ventured to ask him what he thought of the Holy Father and the cardinals, and the rest of the pontifical court.

"God damn them every one!" cried the Jew; "for, as wide as I opened my eyes, I could discover no trace among them of sanctity, devotion, or inclination to good works; on the other hand, it was all lust, avarice, gluttony, fraud, envy, false pride, and worse, if worse can be. The whole great machine seemed to me to be impelled by the power of the devil, rather than by any divine force. Now my deliberate conviction, based upon what I saw, is that your pope, and all the others with him, exert all their skill, all their intellect, all their energy to wipe the Christian religion off the face of the earth, although they ought to be its firmest foundation and support. And yet, notwithstanding all the pains and all the thought which they employ to that end, I see that your religion is extending every day, and every day becoming purer and more glorious, therefore is it demonstrated to my satisfaction that the Holy Spirit protects and defends it as the only true faith, and the most blessed of all faiths. That is why you find me as firmly fixed in my

resolution to become a Christian since my return from Rome, as I was deaf to your appeals and your desire before I made my pilgrimage to that Sodom. So come with me to the Church, my dear Jean, for I am all ready to be baptized."

It is hardly necessary to say that Jean, who anticipated anything else, was happy at Abraham's change of heart; without delay he accompanied his godchild to the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, where he begged the first priest he met to administer the rite of baptism. He gladly complied and the new convert exchanged his Israelitish name of Abraham for the Christian cognomen of Jean. His journey to Rome had implanted his faith deep in his heart, and the good qualities he already possessed were so added to by the practice of our blessed religion, that after an exemplary life he died in the full odor of sanctity.

This tale of Boccaccio's is in itself such an admirable rejoinder to the reproach of being irreligious, which those who mistake our purpose may bring against us, that we do not hesitate to place it in its entirety before the eyes of our readers, without seeking to justify ourselves by any other reply.

Let us not forget, however, that, although the papacy has had its Innocent VIII. and its Alexander VI., who have left an indelible stain upon its records, it has also had its Pius VII. and its Gregory XVI., who have shed undying honor upon it.